Visitors by railway to the Great Exhibition of 1851

Thesis

UNRESTRICTED

VISITORS BY RAILWAY TO THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851

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Contents

Visitors to The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Summary of The Thesis.

This is an examination of the visitors to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in an attempt to establish whether large numbers of people from the provinces did actually travel to London on the recently-established railway network.

Some four million passengers, over and above the normal increase in numbers which was taking place each year as the network expanded, used the railways in 1851 and there is evidence that the vast majority of them were visitors to the Great Exhibition. This was the greatest movement of population in such a concentrated period of time ever to have taken place in Britain up to that date.

Such a movement could not have taken place without the railway. Although the railway companies, with their growing experience of excursion traffic, did prepare for increased traffic, its scale was beyond their expectations. But the traffic was handled with a reasonable degree of punctuality and safety as the companies learned to make full use of all their resources.

Many people organised their visits through subscription associations at a time when there was still considerable hostility to the concept of the Exhibition. Many were encouraged and assisted by their employers who used the visits as an exercise in good industrial relations. Most, however, merely took advantage of the low excursion fares resulting from intense competition between the railway companies. Although many went seeking self-improve-

ment, the majority were attracted by the press publicity to visit the greatest spectacle they were ever likely to encounter.

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I wish to thank T. C. Barker, Professor of Economic History in the London School of Economics and Political Science, for the constant assistance he has given me during my work on this project. His comments and suggestions have been invaluable.

I also wish to thank D. Burford, Lecturer in Mathematics in the Croydon College of Design and Technology, who did the statistical study of railway passenger traffic in Chapter 6. I believed that a simple calculation of the increased number of railway journeys would be of little value, since the growing habit of rail travel and the increased track mileage meant that the number of passenger journeys was increasing every year. If, however, the increased number of journeys could be related to the increases in track mileage, I wondered if the year 1851 would show an abnormal increase which could be attributed to the Exhibition traffic. The calculations required to examine this theory were beyond my capabilities and these were done by Mr. Burford. I supplied the basic data from Parliamentary Papers and drew certain conclusions from the calculated results, but without his calculations, the Chapter could not have been written.

TABLES AND GRAPHS

PREFACE

Any student of history is aware of the danger of concentrating attention on the events of any one year and, from these events, drawing conclusions about the previous or subsequent decades. Such watershed years may exist but they are very rare. 1851 is one such year and the Great Exhibition is one such event, because it does represent a vantage point which seems to mark a division between two distinct chapters in English history.

Such distinctions between chapters in the historical process are obvious to historians with the advantage of hindsight. For contemporaries to appreciate that such a change is taking place is more difficult and more unusual. Again, the events of 1851 are an exception in that many of those responsible for creating, organising and sustaining the Great Exhibition were aware that they were involved in events of unusual significance which seemed to symbolise the major political, social, economic and technological changes which were taking place in society.

The decades since 1815 had been a period of political upheaval arising from social and economic tension and industrial change. The economic depression of the 1840's had coincided with the agitation of Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League and for several years the threat of violent revolution had seemed very real. After a decade of reeling on the edge of disaster and violence, it was hardly surprising that people needed hope and optimism and there was an abundance of these commodities available in 1851. For despite the

problems and the threat of political upheaval as recently as 1848, there were signs of change and improvement. The great Chartist demonstration of 1848 had failed to develop into a revolutionary outbreak and the threat to political stability appeared to have subsided. For most people in Britain the European revolutions of 1848 were a sad example of what happened in less fortunate countries. The skilled and semi-skilled workers whose intelligence might have converted Chartism into a revolutionary movement were working at more practical and permanent methods of self-protection and improvement. There was growing interest and involvement in Friendly Societies, the Co-operative Movement, Mechanics Institutes and the craft unions. An interesting example of such co-operation was the growth of subscription societies in which groups of workers came together to plan and organise excursions to the Great Exhibition.

This growth in political stability was based on growing economic prosperity. The Industrial Revolution had been a brutal process which had created vast human problems, but it cannot be denied that industrialisation had produced vast improvements for the majority of the working classes. The rate of progress had been uneven and unfairly distributed but standards of living had improved for the vast majority.

Added to these ingredients of internal political stability and growing economic prosperity, was the triumph of Free Trade. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 by Sir Robert Peel was much more than a change in economic policy,

it was a triumph for a school of philosophy, some of whose adherents believed that free trade between the nations could lead to unbounded prosperity and international peace. Free trade would generate such harmony between the nations that war would be abolished. This feeling of national unity and international goodwill reached its peak with the Great Exhibition in 1851. It survived only until 1854 when it disappeared under the patriotic nationalism which was such a feature of the Crimean War in 1854, but the fact that it survived for only such a brief period should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the goodwill was for many people genuine and deeply felt. The creators of the Exhibition, Prince Albert, Henry Cole, Francis Fuller, Thomas Cubitt, Bishop Wilberforce and a host of lesser known local figures did believe and did claim publicly that the Exhibition wasa symbol which would usher in an age of international peace and prosperity.

The Great Exhibition is thus worthy of study for a number of reasons. It was conceived and carried out by many able and intelligent men as a great gesture of hope. It does seem to represent a focus of national unity and stability after the previous restless decades, and a symbol of the security and calm which was to prevail for the next two decades, the period best described as the mid-Victorian concensus. It is thus the symbol of a major shift in Victorian politics and it is legitimate to ask how far the Exhibition brought about that political change. The sight of many thousands of working people assembling in Hyde Park not to riot or demonstrate but to celebrate the results of

their work must have done much to allay upper class fears of revolution, fears which were certainly very strong when the Exhibition was being planned.

Other aspects and results of the Exhibition are equally worthy of study. One can examine the story of how the Exhibition came about, how opposition was overcome and how Prince Albert, Henry Cole and Joseph Paxton played their varying roles in the drama. There is a wealth of material for the engineer or the student of art and fashion.

There is a wealth of excellent books covering most of these aspects of the Exhibition. Surprisingly, however, one aspect has been neglected. Little attention has been given to the visitors who made the Exhibition such a success. Most historians have a few anecdotes of individual visitors and most talk loosely of six million visitors. There were, in fact, 6,039,195 visits paid by an unknown number of visitors. We know that there were 25,605 holders of season tickets and they paid a total of 773,766 visits, an average of thirty visits each. Beyond that there is no firm information and it is unlikely that we will ever establish how many visitors there really were. There is enough evidence, however, to indicate that there were several million visitors, many of them from outside London, and that this was the largest movement of population which had taken place in Britain in such a short period of time up to that date.

Only three years after the last major Chartist demonstration in London, a group of prominent individuals working together as members of the Royal Society of Arts boldly

planned and executed a grand gesture of national harmony and industrial power. Despite the critics who predicted crime, disorder and disease, none of these disasters took place and several million people travelled to Hyde Park in perfect safety and harmony. The vast majority were workers, many who brought their wives and families, who had enough money to pay railway fares, entrance money and, in some cases, accommodation. The long debate on how the industrial revolution affected living standards is far from over, but it is clear that by 1851 there were many skilled workers who were able to afford such an excursion. Many joined subscription clubs to save the necessary money over a period of time and there were many employers who were quick to support these clubs as a method of improving relations with their workers. Indeed, there were many employers who paid for their employees to attend in the hope of buying better relations. How far these excursions were successful in achieving their aims and how far these activities by employers contributed to the industrial stability of the 1850s and 1860s deserves a great deal more study.

Most of the visitors, however, made their own way to the Exhibition without the active help of employers and it is curious that these visitors have been subject to very little scrutiny. The habit of railway excursions had grown enormously in 1850, but most such journeys were still quite local. Why did so many people from the industrial cities of the Midlands and the North decide to travel to

London? Why did the Exhibition prove to be such an enormous attraction for so many working class people? How did these people travel and how did this huge movement of population affect the railway companies without which these journeys would have been impossible? It is clear that this movement of population and the reasons behind it raises a considerable number of unanswered questions.

I have attempted to raise some of these questions in the subsequent chapters. I have also attempted to provide some of the answers but I am aware that a great deal more remains to be done to examine living standards and industrial relations to name two of the most obvious areas. I hope that this study may encourage others to look more closely at the visitors who travelled to London by railway from all over Britain to make the Great Exhibition such an amazing success.

Chapter 1.

Railway Passenger Traffic Before 1851.

Britain's railways were in origin colliery mineral lines designed to move coal from mines to market. The ability to move heavy and bulky loads was thus more important than speed. A few exceptional lines did carry passengers. The Oyster-Mouth Railway did so as early as 1807, but the service was based on horse-drawn carriages. (1) Even the Stockton & Darlington, which also ran a passenger service, limited this to horse-hauled coaches. (2) The early railway system thus presented little competition to the established coach services.

The innovation came on 15th September 1830 with the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. The primary intention of the Company had been to carry freight, but the Rainhill Trials of 1829 demonstrated how far locomotion technology and speeds had improved. The Company therefore decided to provide the first regular passenger services powered by locomotives. Running between two major cities, the service proved that the carriage of passengers could be undertaken profitably and on a large scale. (3) Two classes of trains were provided. On first-class trains the fare was 7s, and on second-class 4s. The former stopped only at the main stations and the carriages were made up of enclosed

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(1) J. Simmons, The Railway in England and Wales, 1830-1914, Volume 1, The System and its Working, Leicester University Press, 1978, p. 18.

(2) T. C. Barker and C. I. Savage, An Economic History of Transport in Britain, London, 1974, p. 62.

(3) Simmons, op. cit., p. 19.

compartments for six people, while the latter were made up of a mixture of first-class and open-sided second-class carriages and stopped at all stations. The passenger traffic was so successful that the Company was unable to begin dealing with goods traffic until 4th December 1830 because of a shortage of engine capacity. (4) By 1835 it was conveying about 1,500 passengers per day. This success was hardly surprising since the coach fare had been 10s. inside and 5s. outside, and the time for the journey had been four hours compared to just under half that by train. (5) But, it was also significant that the railway had not only absorbed the coach travellers, who amounted to about 900 passengers a day, it had also attracted new passengers in considerable numbers by its lower fares. Other companies which linked major centres of population also found passenger traffic to be a major source of revenue. This also applied to short routes in industrial areas, and especially within London.

As the 1840's progressed, this trend continued and the greater importance of passenger traffic was perfectly clear from any examination of the financial returns of the largest companies. (6) It was 1852 before the revenue from freight at last exceeded that from passengers in the national totals. The very scale of this unanticipated success created many

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(4) H. Hamilton Ellis, British Railway History, Volume 1, 1954, p. 31.

(5) H. Pollins, Britain's Railways: An Industrial History, Newton Abbot, 1971, p. 49.

(6) H. G. Lewin, Early British Railways. A Short History of Their Origin and Development, London, 1925, p. 99.

problems. The companies had given little thought to the matter of fare scales or to what kind of passengers would be attracted to the railways. Most followed the example of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway and thought at first in terms of providing an alternative service for those people who could afford the expensive stage coach services, with fares on a two-scale system to correspond with the inside and outside services offered by the coaches. The companies believed, understandably enough in the economic conditions of the 1830's, that most of their passengers would come from the middle and upper classes, those who had previously gone by coach and who could afford to pay fares fixed not very much below those on the coaches. The alternative would have been much lower fares to generate mass traffic, with a single passenger providing only a small margin of profit, but heavily loaded to generate large profits. Such a policy, however, would have required considerable investment in rolling stock over and above the high construction costs. In the 1830's most companies managed to operate at moderate cost with remarkably little rolling stock. (7) The Liverpool & Manchester Railway, for example, opened with a stock of only eight locomotives. (8) The other limitation lay in the actual rails used. They were made of wrought-iron and rested on stone blocks. It was soon found that they were too weak to carry the loads which mass traffic would have imposed. (9) Heavier rails had to be substituted. Only in the 1860's did steel rails begin to be used on the busiest lines. (10)

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(7) D. Lardner, Railway Economy, London, 1850, p. 114.

(8) Simmons, op. cit., p. 167.

(9) ibid., p. 143

(10) ibid., p. 148.

Some companies, however, did experiment with a more complex fare structure in an attempt to reach a wider market. The London & Greenwich Railway began operating on 14th December 1837 with a first-class service at 1s. and a second-class service at 8d., but in January 1839 a third-class service was introduced with passengers being carried in open carriages for 6d. Further experiments took place in 1842 and 1843 with return fares cheaper than the price of two singles, but the three class system was retained. (11) It should be noted, however, that this Company was faced with considerable competition from the steamship services and was thus more aware of the potential market for third-class passengers. Other companies in urban areas, particularly those which faced competition from steamship services adopted a similar approach. (12)

The Scottish railway companies adopted a similar approach in providing cheap fares for working-class passengers, but for rather different reasons. The lower living standards in Scotland meant that the numbers of people who could be classified as middle or upper class were very much smaller than in England, and the railway companies could not hope to survive by concentrating exclusively on the first and second-class traffic. Expectations had to be lowered. The Abroath & Forfar Railway was typical in its approach. In 1839 it was operating with only four mixed carriages. The centre compart-

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(11) C. E. Lee, Passenger Class Distinctions, London, 1946, p. 12

(12) For example, the North Shields and the Brandling Junction Railway Companies. See F. Whishaw, Railways of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1840, reprinted Newton Abbot, 1969, p. 48.

ment was first-class and the two at the ends were second. It also had two second-class and three third-class carriages. The contemporary writer, Francis Whishaw commented;

> "We were much surprised, when examining this line in September last, to see a party of reapers travelling by the third-class railway carriages in preference to walking to their work; and we found on inquiry that this was by no means an isolated case, but of everyday occurrence. In fact, with the low fares adopted on this line, it is more economical for the poor man to ride rather than to walk." (13)

The Irish railway companies faced similar problems and generally adopted the same policies as those in Scotland. (14)

All these companies which adopted a three-class system were relatively small and local with few engines and carriages. The large main-line companies, which emerged in the 1840's, faced a much larger investment to provide the same service throughout their areas and in the unprofitable economic climate of the early 1840's such an investment seemed not unwise, but quite unncessary, for the likelihood of large numbers of working-class people being prepared or even able to travel long distances by rail must have seemed remote indeed. Most of the companies, therefore, provided a two-class system, with minor provision for a third-class added very much as an afterthought.

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(13) Whishaw, op. cit., p. 2.

(14) ibid., p. 71.

A turning point seemed to come with the Railway Act of 1844. Its main provision was that every company had to run over all its passenger lines at least one train every day, each way, for third-class passengers, in carriages with seats and protected from the weather, at a speed of not less than 12 m.p.h. including stoppages. The fare could not exceed 1d. per mile for adults. For the first time the railway companies were forced to accept a legal obligation to make provision for less affluent passengers. It might have been thought that this obligation would have been accepted as an opportunity to create and capture a mass market in travel. But the companies insisted on treating it as an obligation, only grudgingly accepted. By 1848 there were still only 170 regular third-class trains in the whole of the United Kingdom. (15) The national stock of carriages in 1848/9 was estimated to be:

First	1,488
Second	2,080
Third	1,488 (16)

The third-class carriages were, of course, larger than the first or second in passenger-carrying capacity, but these figures show that some 30 million third-class and 'parliamentary' passengers were being carried in the same number of carriages as some 7 million first-class passengers.

There was no lack of well-qualified observers prepared to point out the flaws in this policy. The economist and statistician, Dr. Lardner, described in considerable depth the

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(15) Lee. op. cit., p. 19

(16) Lardner, op. cit., p. 114

financial disadvantages of relying too much on first-class express traffic. (17) Henry Scrivenor, a financial author, shared the same views and complained, "the poorer classes of passengers are carried like sheep or cattle on their way to market, in open trucks exposed to the weather, with their eyes, blinded by the smoke, and their clothes covered with ashes from the locomotive chimney, or else shut up in a prison-van, from which no prospect can be obtained." (18) He believed that this was wrong and he urged, mainly for sound financial reasons, the railway directors to change their policies for, "the Railways possess the capability of carrying the multitude.....by the multitude they are to prosper. The returns of traffic support this assertion." (19)

To sum up: the railway companies in their first years of operation showed no great enthusiasm for the idea of carrying passengers. Even the main-line companies which were heavily involved in passenger traffic showed little desire to stimulate mass traffic by reducing fares or improving their services or facilities. Where passengers had to be carried, the companies openly preferred first and second-class passengers. Third-class services, with minor exceptions, were an obligation accepted only with reluctance, although the Great Northern Railway, as the latecomer to the scene, made more generous provision in the late 1840's. Its third-class carriages were the equivalent of second-class on most

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(17) ibid., p. 269

(18) H. Scrivenor, The Railways of the United Kingdom, 1851, Supplementary Volume, London, p. 13

(19) ibid., p. 14

other lines. (20) Similarly, the Midland Railway, a late arrival as a national main-line company, decided to attach third-class carriages to all trains in 1872, and in 1875 abolished the second-class entirely. Gradually the other companies followed suit and made a real effort to cater for the third-class market. By that time, it may be argued, many years and many opportunities had been lost.

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(20) O. S. Nock, The Great Northern Railway, London, 1974, p. 43

Chapter 2.

The Growth of Excursion Traffic.

There was one interesting exception to the picture of partial indifference described in the previous chapter. The railway companies were willing to accept that the working classes could and would afford to take advantage of cheap excusion trains for pleasure travel. They were, of course, right to do so. But, it is worth noting that in this area, too, the companies waited until the initiative had been taken up by outsiders who were able to prove that the excusion idea was viable. Only then did the railway companies venture to take up the concept on a considerable scale.

Before the growth of industrialisation and urbanisation the institution of holidays away from home was a luxury enjoyed only by the wealthy and the most successful of the middle-classes. The idea was usually linked with the requirements of health. The spas of Bath and Tunbridge Wells were patronised for the waters, and sea resorts like Scarborough developed because of the alleged medical merits of sea bathing or drinking sea water. Both also formed meeting places for fashionable society. But these activities had little effect on the great mass of the population. Working-class people could not even afford the occasional day away from home. They had to be content with odd days off work to enjoy the saints' days and the great fairs. At one extreme the Bank of England was closed for no fewer than 44 such days each year at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and its example was followed by other London business firms, (1) but most workers had to be

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(1) P. S. Bagwell, The Transport Revolution from 1770, London, 1974, p. 127

satisfied with Sundays, Christmas and occasional local holidays.

As industrialisation spread in scale and influence attempts were made by employers to reduce the number of days taken off. Inevitably many employees fought against this new discipline, if they could afford to do so, and this attitude could not be easily eradicated by employers. R. & W. Hawthorn, the locomotive builders of Newcastle, found themselves unable to deliver on time an order for locomotives to the Midland Railway. The Locomotive Committee of the Midland Railway complained and Hawthorn was forced to admit, "we would have had some of these delivered before this, but for the Whitsuntide holidays and the Races this week, in both of which we found it impossible to keep the men at work consequently lost nearly a fortnight." (2) The Company did go on to promise that, "nothing will prevent us getting the whole delivered without further delay." (3) This was July 1851 and the Midland Railway was facing the problems of the Great Exhibition traffic, so the annoyance of the Company can be well imagined. This seems to have been an extreme example of the 'Saint Monday' tradition and fits with the observations of many contemporary writers. (4)

Industrialists fought hard to solve this problem with the threat of sackings or loss of wages. More subtley they accepted and encouraged the ideas of popular philosophers like

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(2) British Transport Archives, Midland Locomotive Committee, MID, Piece 167, 1 July 1851, Item 758.

(3) ibid., Item 758

(4) T. Wright, Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes, London, p. 115; S. Sidney, Rides on Railways, London, 1851, p. 107

Martin Tupper that work was inevitable, desirable and godly. Work, which had been simply something necessary to ensure physical survival, became the very reason for living. Days off work were an unnecessary and sinful interruption, with the exception of Sunday which was needed for religious observances. The more intelligent employers, however, came to realise that holidays were a valuable incentive to be dangled in front of their workers and an essential method of re-invigorating them for further work. In the cotton industry of Lancashire and Cheshire a kind of truce emerged, in which employers accepted the institution of Wakes Weeks. The workers saved as much as they could for this holiday. Most of their savings were spent on fairs and local entertainments, but excusions away from home did develop, more especially after the appearance of the railway network. (5)

The improved and eheaper methods of transport were another crucial change introduced by the Industrial Revolution. They introduced a totally new element of mobility. The change came, not at first from the railways, but from the steamboats. The pleasure steamer was aptly named for it introduced to the great mass of the population, not only the era of cheap travel, but also the whole idea of travelling for pleasure. In 1815 Londoners could steam down to Gravesend at a cost of 6d. and in 1817 a service to Southend was introduced at a return fare of 3s. This was quickly extended to Margate, Ramsgate, Deal and Dover. The passengers landed at Margate and Ramsgate by the Margate Pier and Harbour Company show the huge and rapid

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(5) G. Best, Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-75, St. Albans, revised edition, 1973, p. 227.

growth of this traffic,

1812/13	17,000
1820/21	44,000
1830/31	98,000
1835/36	105,000 (6)

One writer estimated that on Whit Monday of 1835 some 100,000 people went down the Thames on some 200 steamers. (7) There was also a considerable volume of excursion traffic in the Bristol Channel in the same period. (8) Clearly, there was a growing demand for short holidays and day excursions. Many skilled and semi-skilled artisans in regular employment must have welcomed the chance to escape briefly from the drabness of their everyday lives. For this section of the urban working-classes the railways were soon to offer an opportunity which was to be eagerly seized. "In 1839, the ordinary 15-minute service between London and Greenwich had to be trebled at Easter and Whitsun." (9) The railway companies may have been far from eager to exploit the potential of third-class traffic, but they were certainly interested in the potential of excursion traffic on holiday occasions; at least they were from the later 1830's, after the possibilities of such traffic had been shown to them.

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(6) J. A. R. Pimlott, The Englishman's Holiday, London, 1947, p. 77

(7) W. Howitt, The Rural Life of England, Volume II, London, 1838, p. 314

(8) G. E. Farr, West Country Passenger Steamers, London, 1956, Chapter 5

(9) Select Committee on Railways, Second Report, 1839, p. 78, quoted Pimlott, op. cit., p. 77

The earliest excursion so far discovered took place in June 1831. Some 120 teachers from the Bennett Street Sunday School in Manchester went to Liverpool on the Manchester & Liverpool Railway. The total cost was £20, which worked out at 3s. 4d., instead of the usual single fare of 3s. 6d., but "it is not clear whether the party was carried in a special train or only in reserved carriages." (10) Two years later a party from the Manchester Mechanics Institute made a similar journey to Liverpool, where they visited the Zoological Gardens and the Docks before having dinner at the Liverpool Mechanics Institute. These excursions were not open to the ordinary members of the public and the initiative did not come from the railway company. The first excursion open to any member of the public who cared to buy a ticket appears to have taken place on the Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway in Cornwall. As it is not clear where the initiative came from, it is likely to have been from the Company. The line had been built to carry sea sand for fertiliser, but that traffic was poor and passenger traffic failed to develop. In 1838 only 3,274 passengers were carried. (11) In 1836 a Wadebridge man was murdered by two brothers from Bodmin. They were caught and sentenced to be hanged. There was naturally great interest in this affair in Wadebridge and the Railway Company took advantage of this to run an excursion from Wadebridge to Bodmin on the occasion of the execution. The gallows had

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(10) Bagwell, op. cit., p.127

(11) Whishaw, op. cit., p. 33

been set up near the station and the excursionists were able to use the train as a gallery. Several hundred people took advantage of this special train. (12) Since the Company had only two passenger carriages, one first and one second-class, most of the excursionists must have travelled in the mineral wagons. (13) All the essential ingredients of the railway excursion were present, but the physical isolation of the Company and the peculiar nature of the occasion no doubt obscured its contemporary importance.

But, less than two years later, there was another event which must have roused more interest among the railway companies. The London & Southampton Railway opened its London terminus at Nine Elms on 21st May 1838 and announced that it would inaugurate its services with eight excursion trains to Kingston for the Epsom race meeting. There was to be a coach service from Kingston to Epsom, but most of the passengers were to be left to make their own way on foot, a distance of some six miles. On the day the station at Nine Elms was swamped by a crowd of thousands, far more than could possibly be carried. As many as possible were dispatched and the unfortunate staff then tried to close the station. But the angry crowd broke into the station and even into the trains, causing considerable damage. Mounted police were required to clear the crowd and and it was mid-day before the station was emptied. Despite this experience the Company was not put off excursion trains and a few weeks later it was running trains to Woking for the Ascot races without any trouble. (14) Another Company had a

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(12) J. Pudney, The Thomas Cook Story, London, 1953, p. 56

(13) Whishaw, op. cit., p. 33

(14) A. A. Jackson, London's Terminii, Newton Abbot, 1969, p. 212

similar experience in 1846. The Eastern Counties Railway offered a day excursion from Norwich to Yarmouth on 30th June. The return fare was 1s. for adults and 3d. for children. The staff must have been staggered when 6,000 people turned up, but great efforts were made and everyone who had turned up was taken and brought back. (15)

Both these companies were nearly beaten to the post by the Grand Junction Railway, which had opened in July 1837. The Company had intended to celebrate the opening by running special trains from Birmingham to Wolverhampton, but the failure to complete the platforms at Wolverhampton on time forced the company to announce that their plans were being abandoned. (16) After the excitement of the opening had subsided, the plans appear to have been dropped. But much of this is only obliquely relevant to the growth of excursion traffic and should more properly be considered as part of the opening, promotional festivities common to most of the companies rather than a deliberate attempt to generate a new kind of traffic.

Despite the activities already described, the main developments took place in the Midlands and the north of England. Thomas Cook, founder of the travel agency which still today bears his name, organised an excursion train from Leicester to Loughborough on 5th July 1841. At a cost of 1s. per head 570 people were taken from Leicester to Loughborough and back for the purpose of attending a temperance meeting. W. Fraser Rae, in his account of the growth of the Cook agency, admits

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(15) C. Allen, The Great Eastern Railway, London, 1961, p. 37

(16) N. W. Webster, Britain's First Trunk Line, Newton Abbot, 1972, p. 97

that Cook may well have been influenced by an earlier event in Leicester. (17) In August 1840 the Leicester Mechanics Institute had organised an excursion for members and their families to Nottingham. Tickets had to be purchased in advance and cost 6s. for first-class, 4s. 6d. for second and 2s. for third. (18) The response to this was so favourable that the excursion was repeated later that same month with a monster train of 65 carriages, 8 first, 49 second and 8 third-class. The train carried some 2,000 passengers, but it was pulled by only one engine, which found the task almost beyond its capacity. When the train failed to arrive on time at Nottingham, another engine had to be sent to the rescue. (19) The interest roused by these events led to a rush of excursions long before Cook entered the scene. In August 1840 the Leicester and Swannington Railway ran a similar excursion to an exhibition in Leicester, and in the same month the Midland Counties Railway ran an excursion train from Leicester to Nottingham. (20) Two other excursions between Nottingham, Leicester and Derby were run by the same company a few weeks later. (21) Fraser Rae himself describes trains running between Cheltenham, Gloucester, Liverpool and Manchester, but he insisted on pressing Cook's claim to originality on the grounds that these trains were open only to members of the

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(17) W. Fraser Rae, The Business of Travel, London, 1891, Chapter 2

(18) C. E. Stretton, The History of the Midland Railway, London, 1901, p. 42

(19) A. Temple Patterson, Radical Leicester, 1780-1850, Leicester University Press, 1954, p. 267

(20) C. F. Dendy Marshall, History of the Southern Railway, revised R. W. Kidner, London, 1963, Volume 1, p. 203

(21) ibid., p. 203

institute which had organised that particular excursion, whereas Cook threw his excursion open to the general public.

The merits of this line of reasoning may safely be ignored, since Cook's first venture was several years behind the excursions described earlier. The claims made for Sir Rowland Hill are even less understandable. Hill became chairman of the London and Brighton Railway after his better known career at the Post Office. C. F. Dendy Marshall's history of the Southern Railway gives Hill the credit for the introduction of excursions. Hill did run a train to Brighton at reduced fares. This train was another monster. It started with 45 carriages drawn by four engines, but other engines and carriages were added at New Cross and Croydon to produce a train which reached Brighton in the shape of 57 carriages and six engines after a journey of 4½ hours. But this took place on Easter Monday 1844, more than three years after Cook's first excursion. (22) Hill certainly did encourage the growth of excursion traffic. By August 1849 excursion tickets from London to the Brighton Races had been reduced to 3s. 6d. (23) His claim to originality and innovation may well apply to the London & Brighton Railway, but certainly not to the railway system generally. Even the most patrician of the companies in its attitude towards any form of reduced fares, the Great Western, had introduced excursions before Hill. The Great Western took some 600/700 passengers from Bristol, Bath, Chippenham and Swindon to London on Michaelmas Day 1842 at half the usual fare. But they did not travel on a special

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(22) ibid., p. 203

(23) E. W. Gilbert, Brighton, Old Ocean's Bauble, London, 1954, p. 150.

train; they used the normal train. Soon after this, summer excursion trains became a regular feature of the company's operations. (24) It was the excursions in the Midlands and the North, however, which were the most significant because of their scale and frequency. For the mechanics of Leicester and the other industrial towns the motive for taking advantage of such excursions is obvious, that of simple curiosity. The Leicester & Swannington Railway had opened in July 1832, but it was very much a line for carrying coal and sand. Even in 1839 the number of passengers averaged only 60 per day. (25) The Midland Counties Railway which opened a line from Leicester to Nottingham and Derby on 1st July 1840 was a very different matter. Leicester than had a railway designed for passenger traffic and the city was linked with London and the cities of the North as well as the other cities of the Midlands. It was hardly surprising that members of the Mechanics Institutes, which were designed to encourage and assist the spread of technical and scientific knowledge, should be eager to inspect at first-hand this major technical advance. Thomas Cook, however, offered more than the satisfaction of simple curiosity. He was a strong supporter of the temperance movement and his first excursionists were taken to Loughborough to take part in a temperance rally. For most people the curiosity value of railways would quickly fade away. People would then need some encouragement to travel. Cook may not have been

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(24) E. T. MacDermot, The Great Western, revised C. R. Clinker, London, 1964, Volume 1, p. 353

(25) Whishaw, op. cit., p. 186

the first to appreciate this, but he was the first to sell the idea of excursion travel on a major scale. He believed that people could be encouraged to travel by train if some kind of pleasure or activity awaited them at their destination. At first he offered tea, buns and temperance speeches, then quickly he moved on to offer the scenery of England, Wales and Scotland as the attractions. His travel agency was built on this simple idea and the lesson was there to be shared by any railway company that wished to apply it. The facts were simple and obvious. In the first few months of operation the Midland Counties Railway was running six passenger trains a day in each direction and the average daily number of passengers was 1,551. (26) The second excursion of the Leicester Mechanics Institute alone numbered some 2,000 passengers and all tickets had to be purchased days in advance; the Company knew exactly what to expect and could plan accordingly. The excursion idea could provide considerable profits if the railway companies cared to take advantage of it. Yet they hesitated, fearing that excursion traffic at cheap fares might deprive them of normal traffic at full fares. It took time to accept that excursion passengers were a new and additional source of revenue, being made up of people who would not normally have made use of the regular services.

As a result of this hesitation the initiative in the early 1840's usually came from outside the companies, as in many of the examples mentioned above. In many cases teachers and clergymen were involved. The organisers of a church bazaar at Grosmont persuaded the directors of the Whitby & Pickering Railway to issue cheap day tickets on their horse-drawn trains

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(26) ibid., p. 333

on 7th and 8th August 1839. (27) In the following year the real flow of excursions began. Events in the Midlands have already been noted. The North was not to be left behind. At Whitsuntide the leaders of the Manchester clergy and the Sunday school teachers asked the Manchester and Birmingham Railway to run excursions out into the country-side for no less than 40,000 children to avoid the moral contamination of race week. The Company was worried about the problem of revenue duty and suggested a way to reduce the cost and the government duty. For every ticket sold the Company would give away another three. The remarkable number of 10,000 tickets was actually sold. (28)

Education played a prominent part in the early excursions. The authorities of Eton College fought bitterly to prevent the Great Western Railway building its line too near Windsor. The case was finally ended in the Company's favour in 1839, but while it dragged on, "the Eton authorities quaintly requested a special train to take their boys up to London for the Coronation of Queen Victoria, which the enemy most politely provided." (29) Other schools may have lacked the grand occasion of a Coronation, but they did find good reasons for taking their pupils on excursions. On 15th August 1840 the Newcastle & North Shields Railway, at the request of the Reverend Mr. Atkinson, took the pupils of Gateshead National School to Tynemouth for the day. The children travelled with single tickets to reduce the government duty and the cost

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(27) R. Marchant, "Early Excursion Trains," The Railway Magazine, 1954, p. 426

(28) ibid., p. 426

(29) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 74

to the organisers. In Scotland, where the educational system was more highly developed, the educational advantages of such excursions was widely appreciated and, in some areas, such excursions had considerable significance. In June 1851 an Aberdeen teacher named Mr. Ledingham took some 90 pupils to Stonehaven and Dunnottar Castle for alive history lesson. (30) This initiative was greatly praised by the local newspapers for the impact it would have on the minds of the children, and the example was quickly followed by other Abderdeen schools. Aberdeen, it must be remembered, acquired its first rail link with Montrose and the south in February 1848, so that it was still something of a novelty in 1851. Later in June 1851 some 190 children from the East Parish School also went to Dunnottar. (31) Again the local press was full of praise and at least one of the Aberdeen newspapers suggested that the schools should approach the Railway Company about an excursion as far as Edinburgh to improve their understanding of Scottish history. In July the boys of Robert Gordon's Hospital did not get quite so far, but some 90 of them who had remained in the school over the holidays did go on an outing to Bridge of Dun and Kinnaird Castle. (32) These educational outings were valuable not only to the pupils involved: the publicity they attracted seemed to have helped to popularise the idea of rail excursions in an area which had only recently acquired railway links with the south. On 22 July 1851 the North of Scotland Gazette commented rather sourly on the curious unwillingness of Aberdonians to take

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(30) The Aberdeen Herald, 14th June, 1851

(31) ibid., 28th June, 1851

(32) ibid., 19th July, 1851

advantage of the excursion trains offered by the Aberdeen Railway Company. Some of those offered had been successful and well patronised, but the previous day some 1,300 people had come to Aberdeen from Arbroath; Aberdeen had achieved nothing on such a large scale. The paper clearly felt that civic pride was being injured by this and it grumbled about the evident inability of the Aberdonians to enjoy themselves. (33) But these grumbles soon had their affect. The papers were able to report that on the first Monday in August, a local holiday, some 2,500 people had gone by rail to Stonehaven, Montrose, Forfar and Arbroath. (34) Even so, Aberdeen then had a population of some 70,000, and the smaller towns to the south were doing much better than that. Montrose, with a population of 15,241, saw some 6,000 people leave the town on 28th July. One of the Montrose newspapers noted that the streets were "left to infants and the very aged, who could not travel to the Railway Station." (35) The Brechin Advertiser, whose humour was usually reserved for Catholics and Mormons, said that the town was even quieter than on a Sunday during a service. (36)

Clergymen and teachers were not the only ones to see the value of excursions. On 25th July 1844 the Ancient Order of Foresters in Darlington wrote to the directors of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, "from Trades people, Mechanics and different grades of the working classes, who cannot leave their Business or employment during the week,

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(33) The North of Scotland Gazette, 22nd July, 1851

(34) ibid., 5th August, 1851

(35) The Montrose Standard, 2nd August, 1851

(36) The Brechin Advertiser, 29th July, 1851

and are anxious to enjoy a little recreation at the present season of the year." (37) The letter requested a special train on Sunday 4th August to leave Darlington at 5.00.a.m. and to return from Stockton at 9.00.p.m. and pointed out that a steamer had been engaged at Stockton. As an inducement the letter promised that "no spirituous liquors will be allowed on board, and any person found in a state of intoxication will not be suffered." (38) This proposed excursion is interesting for it raises the issue of Sunday travelling. On 14th June 1840 R. & W. Hawthorne, the Newcastle locomotive builders, organised a Sunday excursion for their workers. This is perhaps the earliest known example of a 'works outing' by rail. (39) A week later the Leeds Mechanics Institute organised an excursion for their members to York and on 9th August of the same year, the officers arranged another excursion which took 1,250 passengers to Hull. (40) These were all Sunday excursions and they appear to have been run without rousing any opposition. But on 29th August 1841 the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, obviously encouraged by their earlier experience with the Mechanics Institutes, ran a Sunday excursion from Gateshead to Monkswearmouth. This met with severe criticism from local clergymen. The Company, however, persisted; the excursion was successful and this led to a series of similar excursions. (41) But the opposition was an indication

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(37) British Transport Archives, Stockton and Darlington Railway, SAD 8, Piece 235, 25th July, 1844

(38) ibid., 25th July, 1844

(39) Marchant, op. cit., p. 426

(40) ibid., p. 426

(41) ibid., p. 426

of the problems that Sunday working would cause the railway companies as Victorian religious attitudes hardened.

Some employers began to see value in excursions and holidays as an investment in good industrial relations. Henry Ashworth was an owner of two cotton mills who gave evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee on factory legislation in 1840. He did not organise excursions, but he did allow his workers one week's holiday and they did take advantage of this to travel away from home. (42) Other employers went much further than this, "works outings began to be arranged by benevolent employers, such as Horrocks, Jackson & Co. of Preston and Richard Cobden, M.P., of Crosse Hill for their cotton workers to Fleetwood in 1845 and 1846, and Heathcoats of Tiverton for their lace-workers to Teignmouth in 1854." (43) From St. Helens in 1850 the Ravenhead Plate Glassworks sent 400 workers to the Menai Straits and Pilkington's Glass sent 150 workers on an excursion to Halton Castle. (44) These excursions were used as a form of reward for good work and an investment in future good relations. In August 1851 Messrs. Richards & Company of the Broadford Works in Aberdeen sent some 80 of their mechanics on a day outing to Montrose. Buses took the men to the station, they were accompanied by a band and they were transported in second-class carriages. The men had been required to do maintenance work over a holiday, and this was the reward for their extra effort. (45)

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(42) Pimlott, op. cit., p. 80

(43) H. Perkin, The Age of the Railway, London, 1971, p. 227

(44) T. C. Barker and J. R. Harris, A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution, St. Helens, 1750-1900, Liverpool University Press, 1959, p. 316

(45) The Aberdeen Herald, 9th August, 1851

It is impossible to say how effective these outings were in improving industrial relations and reducing absenteeism. R. & W. Hawthorne, as mentioned earlier, were so badly affected by absenteeism in 1851 that they were unable to deliver locomotives on time to the Midland Railway. But in 1851 the reward of a paid trip to the Great Exhibition was widely used, as will be discussed later, and it seems fair to assume that employers would not spend money in this way unless they felt that they would get some reasonable return.

In 1842 the situation changed considerably for the railway companies, and for the excursion passenger. Up to that year the companies had to pay a Government duty of one-eighth of a penny per mile. This was a heavy burden which had stunted the development of cheap fares. The Railway Act of 1842 reduced this tax by altering the duty to 5% of gross receipts from all classes of passengers. This considerably reduced the burden at the cheaper end of the scale and increased the scope for reduced excursion fares. It was after this alteration that the railway companies themselves began to take an interest in excursion traffic and to run their own excursions rather than wait for organised groups to come to them, and it was in this period that Thomas Cook began to operate as a full-time travel agent. By 1846 he was working closely with the Midland Railway and running excursions from Leicester, Derby and Nottingham as far afield as Wales and Scotland, with numerous excursions to beauty spots nearer to hand. In 1843 many of the companies were themselves running a considerable number of excursions to beauty spots nearer to hand. The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway was running a series of excursions to the coastal towns of the Thames estuary, the London & South Western Railway ran several from London to Southampton and the Isle of Wight, and the London & Birmingham

Railway ran at least one from Aylesbury to London at half the normal fare. (46) By the end of the decade all the major companies were heavily involved in excursion traffic. An examination of one weekend in the late summer of 1850 reveals an amazing volume of traffic. On Saturday, 28th September, the Great Western Railway ran several special trains between London and Bristol. The fares on these trains were 14s. for first-class return, 10s. for second-class and 8s. for third-class. One of these trains left Bristol with some 1,800 passengers. Sunday was even busier for the Company with excursions to Woodstock, Oxford, Bristol, Bath and "the ordinary Sunday excursion train, taking multitudes to Windsor." (47) Earlier that year the Company had seemed slightly reluctant to pursue the excursion market. The Directors were informed in May, 1850 that the South Eastern Railway were to run excursions between Reading and London with first-class fares at 7s. 6d., second-class at 5s. and third-class at 3s. 6d. They agreed that, "it was deemed expedient under the circumstances also to advertise to run Excursion Trains on this line, " and they decided to undercut all the fares offered by their rival by 6d. (48) Later the same month they arranged a number of trains from the West Country towns to Windsor for the Ascot Gold Cup and charged only single fares for the return journey. (49) But in August and

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(46) Illustrated London News, 29th July, 1843

(47) ibid., 5th October, 1850

(48) British Transport Archives, Great Western Board Minutes, Rail 250, Piece 4, 15th May, 1850

(49) ibid., 30th May, 1850

September the programme had expanded and a whole series of excursions was being run between Bristol, Bath, Oxford and London. (50) In the same weekend at the end of September 1850 the South Eastern Railway put on the most ambitious of the weekend's efforts with an excursion from London Bridge via Folkestone to Paris at a fare of £1-10s. The passengers left on Saturday and returned the following Thursday. Only a limited number of people could have afforded such an excursion, but some 200 people did take advantage of it on that particular weekend. (51) The London & South Western Railway offered its usual excursions to the coast and the Isle of Wight at fares of 8s. first-class, 6s. second-class and only 3s. for third-class, and the Eastern Counties Railway offered London to Cambridge at a cost of 8s., 6s. and 4s. (52)

The volume of excursion traffic was so great that it roused considerable contemporary comment. Earlier in 1850 the Illustrated London News devoted an editorial article to the subject. It commented on the frequency and the value of these excursions, particularly to the artisans who were able to travel and see the world around them in a way that their parents had never been able to do. They could leave the industrial cities where they were forced to work and live to see the countryside and the older towns and cities. (53) The following year a prominent London publisher, Charles Knight, published a large guidebook which described 20 excur-

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(50) ibid., 8th August and 5th September, 1850

(51) Illustrated London News, 5th October, 1850

(52) ibid., 5th October, 1850

(53) ibid., 21st September, 1850

sions that could be made from London. The list of places to be visited included Brighton, Bath and Oxford. (54) The book was clearly aimed at middle-class readers who could afford such books, but in the introduction, Knight described the hundreds of thousands of people who were taking advantage of railway excursions, many of them "active and intelligent artisans, with their families."

Henry Scrivenor, a former secretary of the Liverpool Stock Exchange, made some of the most interesting comments. In 1849 and 1851 he published a very detailed analysis of the railway companies and their finances. In the first volume excursion traffic was not discussed, but in the second volume he wrote that,

> "the excursion trains for 1850 deserve a passing notice. This holiday traffic has met with a success never before equalled: the multitude have been moved to and fro upon the earth's surface, at fares lower than were ever before ventured upon, yet the Directors of the various Companies seem well satisfied with the result." (55)

Scrivenor was writing for a hard-headed audience interested in the economic potential of this traffic and he took pains to point out that the success of this traffic had not detracted from the ordinary traffic. It was for the companies, "a new source of revenue." (56)

One curious feature of this traffic, and the response

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(54) C. Knight, The Excursion Companion, Excursions from London, 1851, London, 1851, see The Introduction.

(55) Scrivenor, op. cit., p. 13

(56) ibid., p. 13

of the Board of Trade, which gives another indication of the scale of the traffic, was the development of very long trains pulled and pushed by several engines. Several examples of this have already been quoted. It has been suggested that this developed because of unreliability of the engines of the period. The use of several locomotives did ensure that the train would arrive at its destination, whereas with the same number of passengers spread over several trains, the risk of delay or breakdown was increased. (57) But this trend was not welcomed by the Board of Trade, which felt obliged to deplore it in a circular to all the companies. The Stockton & Darlington Railway received a copy dated 17th October 1844, which warned against "the unmanageable size of the trains, travelling at a high rate of speed, and without guards in proportion to the number of carriages and passengers." (58) It was better to use only one engine, but if two engines were used the normal speeds could be kept up, "provided great precautions are taken to prevent collision." (59) If more than two engines were used, the speed should be restricted to 15 m.p.h. There should be enough guards to see that all regulations were enforced and to ensure that excessive crowding on the platforms was avoided. The Board had no wish to suppress "trains for excursion for pleasure," since it was fully aware of their "useful influence," but they must be run

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(57) E. Protheroe, The Railways of the World, London, 1914, p. 198

(58) British Transport Archives, Stockton and Darlington Railway, SAD 8, Piece 213, 17th October, 1844

(59) ibid., 17th October, 1844

with care and they must not be allowed to disrupt normal timetables. (60) The Board of Trade felt it necessary to repeat this warning in its review of 1845, which was published in 1846. (61) Sadly, these warnings were not wholly effective. On 23rd August 1858 the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Railway ran an excursion from Worcester to Wolverhampton with 1,506 passengers, of whom 739 were children. All were carried in one train of 37 carriages and 2 vans. On the way the couplings broke three times. No damage was done but the train was split for the return journey in the evening. The first train was made up of 30 carriages, but even with this reduction, a coupling again broke, allowing 18 carriages to run backwards down an incline at Round Oak, where they crashed into the engine of the second train. The accident killed 14 people and badly injured 50 others. (62)

It is thus quite clear that excursion traffic was firmly established on a large scale in the 1840's. It had begun hesitantly on the initiative of individuals and groups outside the railway companies, but after some doubts, and particularly after the reduction in the railway duties in 1842, the idea was taken up by the companies with great enthusiasm. The hesitation stemmed from the understandable fear that excursion traffic at cheap fares would attract passengers away from normal services and thus cut revenue. But as the decade progressed, the realisation grew that excursions were an addition to the normal traffic and brought additional rev-

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(60) ibid., 17th October, 1844

(61) H. G. Lewin, The Railway Mania and Its Aftermath, London, 1936, p. 112

(62) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 219

enue to the companies by allowing them to make fuller use of their facilities. They also served the valuable functions of attracting favourable newspaper publicity and encouraging the habit of railway travel among the less prosperous working classes.

Chapter 3

The Passenger-Carrying Capacity and Plans of the Railway Companies in 1851.

The railway companies had mixed feelings about the 1851 Exhibition. Some companies had subscribed money to make the Exhibition possible; some were intending to send valuable engines or carriages as exhibits. Without the railway network the movement of materials for the building and goods for exhibition would have been very difficult. (1) Without the railways people from outside London could not possibly have visited the Exhibition in such large numbers. But the national railway network was not yet complete and the companies were still trying to finance the building of new lines and stations. The prospect of heavy investment in new rolling stock to carry large numbers of passengers to the Exhibition at cheap excursion fares was not a welcome one. Had the directors of some of the largest and most important companies realised how far they would be forced to reduce fares by the pressure of competition, they might well have shown less enthusiasm for the whole venture. Since the future could not be foreseen, however, most of the companies, and certainly all those with their own direct entry to London, did, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, decide to encourage excursion traffic. How well were they equipped for the task they were to undertake?

Most of the companies did expect an increase, but none appears to have anticipated the huge rush that was to take place; and none was prepared to stimulate traffic by cutting fares. Their early efforts were concentrated upon the excursion clubs of subscribers who organised, and paid for, their

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(1) C. H. Gibbs-Smith, The Great Exhibition of 1851, A Commemorative Album, London, 1950, p. 31

journey in advance. In these cases the number of passengers, special fares, dates and times could be negotiated in advance. Despite the growing importance of third-class and excursion passengers during the 1840's, the railway companies were reluctant to accept the notion that large numbers of working-class people would be prepared to travel to London to visit an industrial and cultural exhibition. This can be seen from even a brief examination of the passenger-carrying capacity of the main railway companies.

In technology the companies had made great progress by 1851. The early days of hesitant exploration were over. The pioneers who had designed the first locomotives were either dead, in retirement, or in positions of honorary management; a second generation of engineers had grown up and achieved positions of responsibility during the 1840's. The first stage had been to prove that the technology would work, that locomotives could be built. The second stage, with locomotive engineers of the calibre of J. V. Gooch at the London & South Western Railway, his brother Daniel at the Great Western, Archibald Sturrock at the Great Northern and Matthew Kirtley at the Midland, was to develop the technology into a reliable system of mass transport. But, this work was far from complete by 1851 and the Exhibition was to prove a very severe test.

The Great Western Railway and the Great Northern Railway showed the way for the other companies. The former had certain advantages, notably the broad guage which allowed the building of larger, more powerful locomotives with a large boiler capacity. Daniel Gooch and his pupil, Sturrock, were excellent engineers, who were able to build in the 1840's a considerable number of powerful locomotives and large carriages. Between 1840 and 1842 the company ordered and took delivery of 105 new engines, of which 62 were express engines.

In 1842 one of the new goods engines hauled a load of 400 tons and achieved a maximum speed of 25½ m.p.h. (2) For passenger work the Swindon works in 1846 produced a giant locomotive, the 'Great Western,' which within two months of its completion ran from Paddington to Swindon, a distance of 77.3 miles, at an average speed of 59.4 m.p.h. pulling a load of 100 tons. Swindon then went on to produce between 1848 and 1851 16 express locomotives with eight-foot driving wheels, of which the most famous was the 'Lord of the Isles,' which was a prominent exhibit at the Great Exhibition, where it was awarded a gold medal. This magnificent engine did not enter service until 1852, but it remained in regular use with the same boiler until 1881. (3) The engines built in this period by Gooch and Sturrock were the prototypes of those that remained in service until the Great Western abandoned the broad guage in 1892. (4) The company, therefore, did not lack the capacity to carry large numbers of passengers; its limitation was its own lack of interest in third-class and excursion passengers. It preferred to aim at extreme comfort for the first-class, adequate provision for the second-class and as little as possible for the third. The company had begun with third-class carriages which were no better than boxes with very low sides, holding sixty people. After the 1844 Act the company did improve its provision by building six-wheeled carriages, each with 7 compartments holding 8 people, making a total of 56 people per carriage. It should be noted that first-class carriages of a similar length held 32 passengers and the second-

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(2) O. S. Nock, The Great Western Railway, London, 1962, p. 53

(3) ibid., p. 54

(4) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 263

class held 40. (5)

As the excursion traffic grew, however, the Great Western showed its ability to meet the demands made upon it. One example of the company's formidable engine capacity may usefully be quoted. On 11th August 1851 an excursion train left London for Bristol at 8.20. p.m. with 28 carriages of excursion passengers. This train was pulled by only one engine. Some passengers left the train at Swindon, but another 10 carriages were added from another excursion train which was diverging to Cheltenham. This swollen train lost some of its passengers and 10 carriages at Chippenham, causing an hour's delay. After resuming its journey, the train ran out of steam at Fox's Wood beyond Bath, where it was hit by a goods engine. There was little damage and no casualties. (6) The exact number of passengers on this monster train does not appear to have been calculated in the various newspaper reports of the accident, but the excursion had been organised by the Bristol Association, one of the many Exhibition subscription clubs, so most of the passengers were likely to have been second or third-class. It is impossible to estimate the weight of this train, but the fact that one engine was able to pull 38 carriages full of passengers is an indication of the engine capacity achieved by Gooch and Sturrock.

The Great Northern, the newest of the major companies, was also well equipped to meet the excursion traffic. Although Archibald Sturrock had been appointed locomotive superintendant only in 1850, he had wasted no time in improving the rolling stock. He had inherited a miscellaneous collection of about

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(5) Nock, op. cit., p. 152

(6) MacDermot, op. cit., p. 353

150 engines, none of them particularly large or powerful, (7) but he quickly ordered two Jenny Lind engines with six feet driving wheels, and 15 four-wheel coupled engines of his own design. He also purchased 10 express passenger engines of the Crampton design with 6½ feet driving wheels from R. B. Longridge & Company. These were the largest engines then in use on the Great Northern Railway. It is significant that the company agreed to a price of £1,600 per engine, but insisted on a penalty clause of £20 per week for every engine undelivered on 30th April 1851.(8) Having come into being after the 1844 Act, the company was better equipped than most with comfortable carriages. The second-class had cushioned seats and the third-class were the equal of second-class on most other lines. (9) The company was also quick to establish a tradition of providing the best service even for the usually lowly-regarded third-class passenger. In June 1850 the Joint Committee of the Midland Railway and the London & North Western Railway was informed, "that the Third Class Trains accommodating Leeds and London were so timed as to advantage the Great Northern Co. whose trains better accommodated the traffic." (10) Two members of the Committee were asked to look into the matter. It is

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(8) C. H. Grinling, The History of the Great Northern, Revised edition, London, 1966, p. 103; British Transport Archives, Rail 236, Piece 71, Minutes of Executive Committee, 3rd December, 1850.

(9) Nock, op. cit., p. 43

(10) British Transport Archives, Rail 407, Piece 7, Joint Midland/L.N.W.R. Committee, 13th June, 1850, Item 66.

somehow appropriate that the first Great Northern train to leave from the temporary London terminus at Maiden Lane on 8th August 1850 was a Parliamentary train for Peterborough. When King's Cross was brought into use on 14th October, 1852, again the first train out was the early morning Parliamentary bound for York. (11)

The company's main weakness was its lack of the electric telegraph. The officials at Maiden Lane never knew how many trains might be arriving from the north. Under these conditions steady, but not fast running was essential, and it was here that Sturrock's new engines were so valuable. But the heavy traffic did increase the risk of accidents. On 8th September a broken-down coal train caused two excursion trains to collide at Hornsey Station. A train with excursionists returning to Hull, Grimsby and Boston was delayed by the coal train and then hit in the rear by another excursion train bound for York and Leeds, which was being driven "at a rapid rate" by two engines. (12) No one was killed but there were many injured.

The London & North Western Railway did have an electric telegraph system. Euston could be informed of what trains were being dispatched from the provinces and daily timetables could be prepared. (13) Captain Huish, the General Manager, later declared that its value had been incalculable. (14) This advantage was certainly needed for the state of the company's rolling stock was less satisfactory. The Chief

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(11) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 175

(12) The Annual Register, 1851

(13) Grinling, op. cit., p. 104

(14) J. Kieve, The Electric Telegraph, Newton Abbot, 1973, p. 51

Engineer was Robert Stephenson, but the real burden of work fell on the Chief Engineer of the Southern Division, J. E. McConnell. The company's rolling stock in 1851 was made up as follows:

Locomotives & Tenders	555
First-class Carriages	494
Second-class Carriages	420
Third-class Carriages	342

This gave a passenger seating capacity of 40,196 people. (15) But this quantity was not matched by the quality. The Locomotive Committee had little success in persuading the Board of Directors to invest money in new engines. In October 1850 the Committee recorded a number of decisions,

> "That the three Passenger Engines, to complete which only £400 is required, be at once finished. That 5 of the Passenger Engines out of 20 on which £4,228 has been laid out be finished; the remaining 15 remaining in abeyance." (16)

This short-sighted decision soon roused complaints and by February 1851 the Southern Division staff were complaining about the lack of large engines for fast trains. They wanted to order 10 new engines from Sharp Brothers. (17) There were also complaints from the staff at Crewe, who wanted to buy eight passenger engines and 12 goods engines. It was agreed to recommend this purchase to the Board and on 29th March the Locomotive Committee was able to accept a tender from Fairbairn

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(15) Sidney, op. cit., p. 20

The Company Report for 1851 gave rather higher figures:

	30th June, 1851	31st December, 1851
Locomotives	563	582
First-class Carriages	555	586
Second-class Carriages	489	564
Third-class Carriages	345	344

These figures were reported in The Railway Times, 21st February, 1852.

(16) British Transport Archives, L.N.W.R. Locomotive Committee, L.N.W.R. 1, Piece 221, 11th October, 1850.

(17) ibid., 20th February, 1851

& Sons for 20 engines at £2,00 each. But these would be of little assistance during the Exhibition, for the first delivery of six was due only on 1st August 1851. (18)

The lack of engines was not the only problem for the company. Most of the existing engines were small Bury locomotives and Hamilton Ellis has observed that,

> "not least among the sights of the Exhibition year was that the ancient Bury engines, in twos and threes and fours, struggling along with enormous trains, with all schedules, regular, passenger, excursion or goods, dissolved into chaos incredible." (19)

Captain Huish himself was to feel the effects of this chaos. On 22nd November, while the company was still recovering from the effects of the massive extra traffic, the earlier accident at Hornsey Station was virtually repeated. Two passenger trains were delayed by a cattle train which did not have a powerful enough engine, and one of the passenger trains ran into the rear of the other at Weedon Station. One passenger was killed and among the 16 injured was Huish himself. (20)

The Great Northern's main rival for the lucrative traffic from Yorkshire and the Midlands was the Midland Railway Company. This company was well prepared in terms of seating capacity, but it was less well equipped with engines. The Company's Report for the half-year ending 30th June 1851 gave a breakdown of the company's stock and showed also the increase that had taken place since the previous half year as follows:

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(18) ibid., 29th March, 1851

(19) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 188 There were no accidents, however, in the Exhibition period.

(20) The Annual Register, 1851

Engines & Tenders	287	Increase on previous half-year	8
First-class	125		2
Composite	62		5
Second-class	175		4
Third-class	295		97

(21)

The company clearly anticipated an increase in excursion traffic and was prepared to meet it, at least in the provision of third-class carriages. The provision of locomotives was, however, less satisfactory. Matthew Kirtley had become Locomotive Superintendent of the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway in 1841 and he took the same post with the Midland Railway on its formation in 1844. Kirtley was an able engineer, but he had to cope with a very mixed collection of stock from the various companies which had merged to form the Midland Railway. The backbone of this collection was a group of small Bury engines. (22) It should also be remembered that the figures presented in a report to shareholders and the public give a highly optimistic picture. Kirtley presented regular reports to the Locomotive Committee on the number of engines actually available for work, and this gave a more realistic assessment.

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(21) The Leeds Intelligencer, 16th August, 1851

(22) Hamilton Ellis, op. cit., p. 188

Midland Railway Engines in Steam: 1850-1851

	May 1850	May 1851	July 1850	July 1851	Aug. 1850	Aug. 1851	Sept. 1850	Sept. 1851	Oct. 1850	Oct. 1851
Passenger	70	73	70	75	71	79	69	81	70	79
Goods	64	76	60	73	59	74	65	74	68	80
Shunting	28	33	30	34	30	34	30	34	30	32
Total	162	182	160	182	160	187	164	189	168	191

(23)

The number of available passenger engines had increased, but the improvement was barely enough to cope with the demands of the Exhibition traffic. By September, 1851 Kirtley was warning his Locomotive Committee that his passenger engines were not numerous enough to cope with the existing mileage. (24) It was not until the later 1850's that he was given authority to design and produce more powerful locomotives in adequate numbers.

Kirtley's counterpart at the London & South Western Railway was John V. Gooch. He has been over-shadowed by his brother Daniel at the Great Western; but it should not be forgotten that he built the first engine at the Nine Elms depot in December, 1843, three years before his brother built the Great Western at Swindon. Throughout the 1840's Gooch constructed a series of express locomotives of steadily increasing power and dimensions. These were as powerful as any operated by the standard guage companies. (25)

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(23) Figures compiled from Kirtley's reports to the Midland Locomotive Committee, British Transport Archives, MID 1, Piece 167, 1st July, 2nd September, 30th September, 4th November, 1851.

(24) ibid., 30th September, 1851

(25) C. F. Dendy Marshall, History of the Southern Railway, revised by R. W. Kidner, London, 1963, p. 163

Early in 1850 Gooch left the London & South Western and was replaced by Joseph Beattie, who had previously been responsible for carriages and wagons. Beattie realised that new stock would be required to cope with the Exhibition traffic and he warned the Locomotive Committee that he must have new engines. (26) The Committee agreed to order six new tank engines and the contract was awarded to Sharpe & Company of Manchester. Beattie was also concerned about the carriage stock. To reduce maintenance costs he persuaded the Committee that the third-class carriages not in use during the winter should be stored under the arches at Waterloo. (27) He also persuaded the Committee that the stock must be increased and it was decided to order:

	Number	Passenger Capacity per Carriage
First Class	10	32
Second Class	24	40
Third Open	20	60
Third Closed	10	40

(28)

This gave an additional seating capacity of 2,880 and it is significant that 1,600 seats, 55.6% of them, were third-class. Since existing third-class carriages had been put at that time into storage at Waterloo, the new carriages were clearly to meet the demands of the anticipated traffic. Beattie offered to build these carriages in the company's own workshops and promised to have them ready by 15th April 1851. The Committee

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(26) British Transport Archives, London & South Western Railway Locomotive Committee, LSW 1, Piece 176, 8th October and 17th December, 1850.

(27) ibid., 5th November, 1850

(28) ibid., 19th November, 1850

accepted this offer and he was instructed to proceed. (29) The London & South Western's ability to cope with the Exhibition traffic owed much to the foresight of Joseph Beattie.

After leaving the London and South Western in 1850, John Gooch moved to the Eastern Counties Railway where he remained until his retirement in 1856. On his leaving a report was presented to him containing a summary of the locomotive and carriage stock during his period with the company. This report shows that Gooch did manager to increase the stock of locomotives in the period just before the Exhibition.

Eastern Counties Railway.	Number of Locomotives:
July, 1850	140
January, 1850	140
July, 1851	151
January, 1851	167*

(30)

* 10 of these were locomotives taken over from the East Anglian Railway.

The report also gave a breakdown of the carriage stock and its condition.

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(29) ibid., 3rd December, 1850

(30) British Transport Archives, Eastern Counties Railway, Rail 186, Piece 103, Report Presented to J. V. Gooch, 1856

Eastern Counties Railway. Condition of Carriage Stock:

	July, 1850	January, 1851	July, 1851	January, 1852
Good running condition	429	478	442	446
Good - needing painting	112	124	216	152
Needing slight repairs	50	50	35	91
Needing general repairs	109	67	72	35
Total	700	719	765	724 (31)

It is not made clear why the total number of carriages had fallen by January 1852. It is possible that the heavy traffic of the Exhibition period had caused worn stock to be scrapped. But it does seem clear that, in the vital Exhibition months, the relatively unimportant work of painting was neglected in favour of increasing the number of carriages available for use.

The directors of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway seem to have believed that the company was fully equipped to meet all the demands likely to be made upon it. The stock of locomotives in December 1849 was as follows:

In good working order	99
Undergoing repairs	13
Waiting for repairs	2
Total	114 (32)

A year later the directors were to agree that the company was over-stocked with locomotives. The curious decision was taken that fourteen were to be laid up and their value credited to

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(31) ibid., Gooch Report

(32) British Transport Archives, London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, Board Minutes, LBS 1, Piece 67, 3rd December, 1849

the capital account. (33) They could, of course, be brought out when necessary; but the decision is still an odd one, since at the same time the company's provision of carriages was being expanded enormously. A carriage stock register of 1880 shows that of 564 first-class carriages, 96 were built between 1841 and 1851; of 428 second-class, 38 were built between 1841 and 1851; of 840 third-class, 135 were built between 1841 and 1851. (34) From this register we can make the following estimates:

	Total in 1851	Built during 1851	Seats per carriage*	Total seating capacity
First class	96	34	18	1,728
Second class	38	2	30	1,140
Third class	135	60	40	5,400
				8,268

It is also worth noting that the company had built 36 third-class carriages in 1850, which does seem to indicate that it was expecting a substantial increase in this type of traffic for the Exhibition.

The South Eastern Railway was curiously ambivalent towards the Exhibition; some of the decisions taken were mutually contradictory. The directors agreed to contribute 100 guineas towards it, (35) and the Locomotive Superintendent was allowed to purchase five long-boilered engines from Messrs. Stephenson & Company at a cost of £1,400 each, (36) which was considerably cheaper than those supplied to the London & North Western Railway by Fairbairn & Sons. Two of these were to be delivered by the end of May, one in June and two in July,

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(33) ibid., 30th December, 1850

(34) ibid., LBS 5, Piece 93, 1880

(35) British Transport Archives, South Eastern Railway, Board Minutes, SER 1, Piece 26, 27th December, 1850

(36) ibid., 23rd January, 1851

in good time for the Exhibition traffic. In April 1851 the first of these engines made a test run from London to Folkestone and achieved a speed of 60 miles per hour. (37)

Yet, despite this preparation, the directors showed a remarkable lack of interest in the possible Exhibition traffic. When Colonel Reid, Secretary to the Exhibition Commissioners, wrote to the various companies inviting representatives to attend a meeting to discuss the arrangements for working-class visitors, the Secretary of the South Eastern was instructed to reply that the directors regretted that they had a previous engagement. (38) Soon after this the directors were informed that Mark Huish of the London & North Western was convening a meeting for the same purpose. On this occasion the rebuff was more blatant; his letter was ignored. Some weeks later Huish wrote asking for a reply to his previous letter. (39) This time the directors did decide to reply, the Secretary being instructed to say that they would endeavour to be prepared to do justice to the traffic of 1851 and that they were taking measures accordingly. (40) That measures were being taken would have been of interest to Mr. Bourer, the secretary of the Folkestone subscription club. He was trying to negotiate reduced fares for his members and in December 1850 he was still being told that the "Directors had not arranged any plan for conveying Subscription Clubs to the Exhibition nor could they do so until the rules and systems intended to be adopted by the

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(37) Illustrated London News, 5th April, 1851

(38) British Transport Archives, South Eastern Railway, Board Minutes, SER 1, Piece 26, 16th September, 1850

(39) ibid., 22nd September, 1850

(40) ibid., 31st October, 1850

Commissioners were known to them but that the Directors were anxious to afford every facility to Excursionists." (41) This anxiety to help hardly accords with their refusal to attend meetings and it was not until the end of July 1851 that detailed proposals were brought before the Board. The refusal to meet Huish may have come from a feeling that he was trying to put himself forward as leader of the industry; the refusal to meet Reid seems inexplicable. The company's reluctance to offer excursion fares is more understandable, for, it must be remembered, the South Eastern served the towns of the Thames estuary, an area already well served by steamships. A railway company already facing severe competition may well have felt that introducing cheap fares would have been too risky. Fortunately for the Exhibition passengers this attitude was not at all typical of the other major companies. Only one railway company seems to have been totally hostile to the Exhibition. This was the York, Newcastle & Berwick Company, which refused to provide any cheap fares or special services. (42) But it did for a time appear that the London & South Eastern Railway might be adopting a similar position.

One way in which some of the more far-sighted companies prepared for the Exhibition is worth mentioning. Several of them appointed agents to stimulate and control their excursion traffic. The best known of these was Thomas Cook, who was soon to make a national reputation for himself as a travel agent. But Cook himself seems to have been

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(41) ibid., 31st December, 1850

(42) The Railway Times, 16th August, 1851

curiously slow to see the full possibilities offered by the Exhibition. He was certainly a supporter and addressed many public meetings where excursion clubs were set up. One of his biographers has claimed that he actually formed such clubs but gave no details. (43) In fact Cook appears to have made no preparations to involve himself in running excursions to London. The initiative was taken by the chairman of the Midland Railway, John Ellis, M.P. and Joseph Paxton, who was one of the directors. They met Cook in Derby and he was asked to act as the main agent in organising excursion traffic for the Midland Railway. He was to have full control of all traffic south of Sheffield, but north of Sheffield he had to share it with Messrs. Cuttle & Salverly of Wakefield. (44) For every passenger booked he was to receive a proportion of the fare, an agreement which had to be re-negotiated when the competition of the Great Northern Railway drove down fares. Cook threw himself into his task with great energy and enthusiasm and his efforts met with great success. He and his son travelled incessantly round the towns of Yorkshire and the Midlands to publicise

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(43) Fraser Rae, op. cit., p. 47

(44) Cook was on his way to Liverpool for discussions with the directors of the Great Atlantic Liners Company about the possibility of organising excursions to the United States in 1851. After the discussions with Ellis and Paxton, his American plans were abandoned. See Fraser Rae, op. cit., pp. 44/46; Pudney, op. cit., p. 101.

their excursions. Bands were employed to play outside the mills and factories on Saturday nights to attract the attention of newly-paid workers, and then Cook and his son would begin their work of selling tickets and getting the workers on to the waiting trains. (45) The culmination of his activities in 1851 was a spectacular excursion in which 3,000 school children were taken from Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. A hugh collection of omnibuses and cabs were needed to convey them to Hyde Park. (46) By the end of the Exhibition Cook had been responsible for sending some 165,000 excursionists to London on the Midland Railway. Assuming that all these people paid only one visit to the Crystal Palace, Cook and his son were responsible for arranging 2.8% of all the visits paid, a remarkable achievement for two men.

Cook was the most successful of these agents, but he was certainly not the only one. The London & North Western may have been influenced by its ally, the Midland, for in March 1851 a Mr. Marcus was appointed to stimulate and superintend the Exhibition traffic on its behalf. (47) Marcus was less flamboyant than Cook and did not enjoy quite the same degree of success, but he was able to report to the directors that the "number of passengers conveyed under his direction during the Exhibition was 90,000, the number of trains 145 and the total receipts by the Company £61,805, while not a single person was lost during the pressure." (48) Not surprisingly, the "Committee was highly satisfied."

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(45) Pudney, op. cit., p. 105

(46) ibid., p. 117

(47) British Transport Archives, London & North Western, General Road & Traffic Committee, LNW 1, Piece 140, 11th March, 1851

(48) ibid., 6th February, 1852

(49) Marcus was not paid by results like Cook, but received a flat sum of £300.

The two main companies on the south coast, the London & South Western and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, were also concerned about the potential traffic. They were both looking across the Channel. In January 1851 the Secretary of the London & South Western was instructed by the Board to find an agent to handle the traffic from the Continent and the Channel Islands. (50) The post was given to a M. Mimardiere of Cherbourg and he was instructed to operate both in and beyond Paris. He travelled widely in France and in April alone he was paid £70 to cover his expenses. (51) He launched an advertising campaign in Paris and his efforts were considered to have been so successful that in December 1851 he was paid £75 and engaged at a salary of £150 per annum as the company's full-time agent in France. (52) The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway followed this example by appointing a M. A. D. Bosson as their agent in Paris and Dieppe. (53)

It is thus clear that some of the companies went further in their preparations than simply providing new engines and rolling stock. Some were prepared to make an effort to stimulate traffic, although they still appear to have been thinking mainly of first and second-class traffic. The main

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(49) ibid., 6th February, 1852

(50) British Transport Archives, London & South Western, Commercial Committee, LSW 1, Piece 162, 31st January, 1851

(51) ibid., 28th February, 1851

(52) ibid., 4th December, 1851

(53) British Transport Archives, London, Brighton & South Coast, Board Minutes, LBS 1, Piece 68, 28th April, 1851

effort to attract third-class passengers with very low fares came in Yorkshire and the Midlands, and this was the result of feuding between companies rather than a planned conscious decision. The companies did not realise how much third-class traffic would be created in 1851, because they assumed that this area of the market would be fully catered for by the local associations; and, the early success of these associations made that a reasonable assumption.

Chapter 4.

The Local Associations.

The work of local associations was vital to the success of the Great Exhibition. These associations were subscription clubs, to which the members, who were usually tradesmen, skilled artisans or semi-skilled workers, could subscribe small sums each week. The money was most commonly invested by the officers of the club in the local savings bank, together with any donations which might be solicited, and the money was then used to pay for the excursion to the Exhibition. The officers of the club would negotiate with the local railway or steamship company a reduced fare for the group. They might organise lodgings in London, the Mechanics Institute at Ranelagh being very popular due to its size and cheapness, or they might simply provide information about lodgings to their members. In some cases they provided guides for their members during their stay in the metropolis, in other cases guides were provided for the actual tours of the Crystal Palace.

These associations first sprang up in the early months of 1850 and by the autumn they were flourishing on a substantial scale. In 1850 there was still considerable opposition to the whole Exhibition idea, but Paxton's designs for the Crystal Palace were published in the Illustrated London News of 6th July 1850 and this aroused enormous interest even in the provinces. Many local newspapers, which were usually bereft of any form of illustration, took the unusual step of copying the engravings. By August the design had been accepted and the concrete foundations were being laid in Hyde Park. Few could doubt that the Exhibition would really take place. This certainty produced a great increase in the

number of subscription clubs.

The first of these appears to have been the Sunderland Association, founded in March 1850. The initiative came from the Mayor and a local glass manufacturer, James Hartley. It is pleasant to record that their efforts appear to have been highly successful, in that these two gentlemen brought about 1,000 people to the Crystal Palace on 1st September 1851. (1) But the real rush of associations did not come until the autumn of 1850. One of the best publicised was the Exeter Association, for one of the founders was Thomas Latimer, the editor of the Western Times, and a strong supporter of the Exhibition. By late November this Association had some 500 members, each subscribing 6d. per week, and prospective applicants were being warned that they would have to pay a higher figure to compensate for their late start. Negotiations with the Great Western Railway had produced a tentative agreement that the return fare would be 16s. 2d. (2) The example of Exeter was quickly followed. Associations appeared in most of the major cities from Bristol to Edinburgh and Dublin. Leeds had so many that it was soon necessary to set up a central liasion committee. Martin Cawood, the secretary of the Leeds Executive Committee, arranged a meeting for this purpose in January 1851. (3) Cawood was a tireless worker who never missed a chance to publicise the Exhibition and the subscription clubs in the newspapers of Leeds and Yorkshire. Associations appeared in towns as far apart as

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(1) Illustrated London News, 6th September, 1851

(2) The Journal of the Exhibition, published by The Critic, 23rd November, 1850

(3) The Leeds Times, 4th January, 1851

Inverness, Bath, Aberdeen and Norwich, and also in much smaller villages. East Anglia and Lincolnshire, not surprisingly with their proximity to London, were well covered with associations in towns like Market Rasen, Stoke Holy Cross, East Dereham, Great Dunmow and many others. The area round Exeter, influenced no doubt by the Western Times, was also heavily covered with clubs in small towns and villages like Totnes and Ashburton. The attitude of local newspapers, whether controlled by someone like Latimer or cleverly exploited by someone like Cawood, was clearly crucial.

This development clearly interested the Royal Commissioners and the Executive Committee of the Exhibition. It provided clear evidence that, if the problem and objections could finally be overcome, people would actually attend. Colonel Reid, chairman of the Executive Committee, and Mr. Alexander Redgrave of the Home Office were asked to examine the problems that might be posed by the influx of working class visitors from the provinces. It was quickly decided that the Commissioners should not involve themselves in the provision of accommodation, although there were some suggestions that, if they could move most of the soldiers out of London, the barracks could be used as lodging houses. (4) But the Executive Committee did open an office at Old Palace Yard, Westminster to provide a register of accommodation, "persons willing to receive the working classes are to register their names at the office of the Commissioners, stating prices and accommodations. An officer of the Commissioners inspects the place, and applies to the references given, and if all is found to be satisfactory, the address and particulars

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(4) The Journal of the Exhibition, 18th January, 1851

are registered." (5) The service was for anyone who cared to apply, but it would be invaluable to the officers of the provincial associations, "the Committees of the Provincial Associations will be enabled at all times to obtain proper lodgings for their members, at prices previously known, and, therefore, in which imposition will be impracticable." (5)

On the question of travel the Executive Committee was prepared to be even more helpful and in September, 1850, there were negotiations with representatives of most of the railway companies likely to be involved in excursion traffic. (6) These included the Aberdeen, the Ambergate, the Nottingham & Boston, the Bristol & Exeter, the Caledonian, the Birkenhead & Cheshire Junction, the Chester & Holyhead, the Eastern Counties, the East Anglian, the Eastern Union, the Glasgow & Greenock, the Great Western, the Great Northern, the Kendal & Windermere, the Lancaster & Carlisle, the Leeds & Thirsk, the London & Brighton, the London & North Western, the London & South Western, the Midland, the Newcastle & Carlisle, the North British, the North Staffordshire, the Stockton & Darlington, the York, Newcastle & Berwick and the York and North Midland Railway Companies. All these companies agreed to assist the subscription associations by running excursion trains. The fares would have to be determined between the companies the the individual clubs, but would in no case be higher than the existing fares on the Parliamentary trains. The tickets would be valid for a stay of not more than six days in London and the journeys would

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(5) ibid., 4th January, 1851

(6) P. Berlyn, Popular Narrative of the Origin of the Great Exhibition, London, 1851, p. 168

begin after the 1s. admission to the Crystal Palace had come into force. In their turn the associations would provide not fewer than 250 passengers for each excursion. Those in the smaller towns and villages were not always able to meet this condition, but it was usually possible to form links with a larger group in the nearest large town. The association in the village of Ashburton, for example, was only able to muster some 40 excursionists, but they joined one of the trains organised by the Exeter association. (7) But despite this agreement with the railway companies, some of the subscription associations were to have trouble in making their travel arrangements.

The agreement may also have had one unexpected result. The intention was to stimulate the formation of subscription clubs by implying that only members would be able to enjoy reduced fares. (8) In return for these reductions the railway companies would gain the advantage of knowing what traffic to expect. But, for a time, this seems to have encouraged the idea that there would be little excursion traffic beyond that organised by the subscription clubs, and this may help to explain why the railway companies were slow to realise how great the volume of excursion traffic was going to be. In February 1851 the Joint Committee of the London & North Western Railway and the Midland Railway did agree that passengers not in clubs would be eligible for the reduced fares, but little seems to have been done to publicise this decision and none of the other major companies

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(7) The Western Times, 16th August, 1851

(8) Poster issued by Pennock Tigar, Mayor of Beverley, 24th December, 1850. East Riding County Record Office, Bird 15299, Section 5, DDBD/5, No. 53

seem to have given any thought to this problem. (9)

The motives behind the formation of these subscription associations are worth consideration. The common thread was obviously the desire to visit the Exhibition and London, the modern Babylon of the contemporary press, but other motives appear to have been at work. In some cases some degree of civic pride and local competitive spirits played a part. These feelings had already been roused by the collection of subscriptions to pay for the Exhibition. (10) Where a determined effort had already been made to raise money by a local committee, it was understandable that interest should have been roused and it needed only the enthusiasm of a few people to stimulate the formation of a local association and to rouse the interest of others. Martin Cawood, the secretary of the Leeds Executive Committee, was tireless in his efforts to organise subscriptions, exhibits and visitors. He wrote frequent letters to the newspapers in Leeds, the Intelligencer, the Leeds Times, and the Leeds Mercury & General Advertiser both before and during the Exhibition to stimulate interest. He took part in negotiations with the Midland and the London & North Western Railway Companies and in January, 1851 he took the initiative in forming a liasion committee to

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(9) British Transport Archives, Joint Committee of London & North Western Railway and Midland Railway, Rail 406, Piece 7, 12th February 1851.

(10) Local newspapers frequently reported how much had been raised, the names of local exhibitors etc.; see, for example, the Montrose Standard, 9th May, 1851. The small town of Montrose had two exhibitors and had raised £62-7s., which compared very well with the efforts of some considerably larger towns.

co-ordinate the work of the various subscription associations in Leeds. (11) Without his efforts these clubs might not have come into existence.

In many cases the lead came from the Mayor or members of the corporation. The case of Pennock Tigar in Beverley has already been mentioned. (12) In Aberdeen the initiative came from the Lord Provost, George Thompson, who tried to organise an association in November, 1850. (13) He first negotiated with the Steam Navigation Company, which offered a sea trip with ten days being spent in London, during which time the steamer could be used as a floating hotel. The total cost of this was reckoned to be £3 and the Provost recommended a subscription rate of 2s. per week. This might have been possible for clerical workers or skilled artisans but would probably have excluded the unskilled and lower paid workers. But the Steam Navigation Company was not the only interested organisation. The Aberdeen Railway Company had opened a railway link with Dundee in 1848 and by 1850 this line had linked at Dubton near Montrose with the line to Brechin and Perth so that by 1st April 1850 there was a direct rail link from Aberdeen to London. The Aberdeen Railway offered a more modest, and probably more attractive deal. They would run a special train to London allowing the passengers to stay 6 days in the capital, at a cost of £1-10-9d. They wanted 250 people, but agreed that if this number were not reached, they would still take the party by linking up with some other excursion party. Sadly, all this effort seems to have come to nothing; although there is evidence that indivi-

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(11) The Leeds Times, 4th January, 1851

(12) See also the Illustrated London News, 11th January, 1851

(13) Journal of the Exhibition, 11th January, 1851

duals did make the journey, there is nothing in the local press to indicate that any organised excursion did take place. Civic leaders took the initiative in many other towns including Bath, Derby, Norwich, Dunstable, Salford and Folkestone. In Southampton the lead came, not from the Mayor himself, but from his son, Arthur Andrews. Several clubs emerged in Southampton aimed specifically at the working classes since the subscription was only 1d. per week. This may sound impossibly low, but the South Western Railway Company was talking of excursion fares of only 2s. return. Mr. Andrew's association emerged as the largest. By January, 1851 there were some 1,000 members and he was negotiating for his members to stay at the Mechanics Home at Ranelagh. (14) His father, Mr. R. Andrews was a mechanic who had built up a successful carriage-making business. In May, 1851, like many other employers, he gave his employees, nearly 200 in number, two days holiday so that they could visit the Exhibition. (15)

Very often local landowners, businessmen or even members of Parliament acted as patrons and gave advice or financial assistance. Mr. Brotherton, the local M.P., gave considerable help in the running of the Salford Association. (16) At Woburn the Russell family helped to run the local association (17) and the Duke of Bedford donated £10 to the association at Tavistock. (18) One of the most generously supported associations was the Norwich Operatives Club, which enjoyed the support of the Mayor, Mr. Woodcock and more usefully,

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(14) ibid., 1st February, 1851

(15) The Western Times, 24th May, 1851

(16) Journal of the Exhibition, 18th January, 1851

(17) ibid., 1st February, 1851

(18) The Western Times, 31st May, 1851

the local M.P., the wealthy railway contractor, Sir Samuel Peto. In early July some 300 people, members of the club and their wives, spent a week in London, visiting not only the Exhibition but many other local sights. Peto arranged a visit to Woolwich Dockyard and he paid for a formal dinner for the visitors at the Royal Pavilion Hotel. (19) This level of generosity was far from exceptional, there are many other examples of individual charity on a remarkable scale.

Where civic help was not forthcoming this was usually because of strong local Protectionist feeling. Protectionist newspapers were usually guarded in their attitude towards the Exhibition. In Stranraer the local paper, the Galloway Advertiser & Wigtownshire Free Press was owned by the Stair family. The paper gave the Exhibition little coverage and there is no indication of any local interest in the affair. Only the opening ceremony receiyed lengthy and favourable coverage. Even the remarkable comment, "the Great Exhibition is an admirable sequel to our Free Trade policy" crept into the article. (20) This must have caused some surprise in Stranraer for both Lord Stair and his newspaper were strongly Protectionist. Presumably, the editorial was simply copied from one of the national papers and did not receive sufficiently careful editing. In Liverpool a similar lack of interest was evident, the city being close to the influence of the Derby family, "Liverpool..... gave very cold and niggard support to the Great Exhibition (chiefly because the project was ill

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(19) Illustrated London News, 12th July, 1851

(20) The Galloway Advertiser & Wigtownshire Free Press, 15th May, 1851

received by the ducal house which patronizes the fashionables of the town)". (21) This was the opinion of Samuel Sidney, writer, journalist, assistant commissioner of the Exhibition and also a firm Protectionist, at least for agriculture, so it can be reasonably assumed that he knew what he was talking about. The influential Liverpool Mail, a very conservative paper, saw disaster in the whole affair and this must have had some effect. (22) It was not until January 1851 that an association emerged in Liverpool and it was organised by a group of local clergymen. The minimum subscription was 1s. and the return fare was expected to be 15s. 6d. The club would not organise lodgings, but it would provide information to those who wanted it. (23)

In many cases the initiative came from individuals who were enthusiastic about the Exhibition. The influence of Latimer in Exeter, Cawood in Leeds and Andrews in Southampton has already been mentioned. In Leicester Thomas Cook was an active supporter of the association idea and he spoke frequently in the towns of Yorkshire and the Midlands. The Leicester Association was set up on 28th January 1851, after a public meeting at which Cook was one of the main speakers. (24)

In some cases, however, no civic leaders or prominent local figures came forward and the lead was taken within the network of local organisations which already existed. In many towns there were associations of working men which had

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(21) Sidney, op. cit., p. 164

(22) T. Ellison, Gleanings and Reminiscences, Liverpool, 1905, p. 309

(23) The Journal of the Exhibition, 4th January, 1851

(24) ibid., 1st February, 1851

been involved in the Reform agitation and the Chartist upheavals of the 1830's and 1840's. In many towns there were Mechanics Institutes. These had been set up to provide educational facilities for the artisans and the unskilled factory workers, but by 1850 they had clearly failed in this purpose, in that they had been taken over by the lower middle classes, the clerical workers and the tradesmen. The report of the Aberdeen Mechanics Institute for the winter of 1850/51 shows that 303 pupils had attended the various classes. The occupation of those who won the various prizes was as follows:

SUBJECT	PRIZE	OCCUPATION
Mathematics	Silver Medal	Combmaker
Agricultural Drawing	Silver Medal	Farmer
Mechanical Drawing	Silver Medal	Millwright
	Second	Millwright
Drawing Class	Silver Medal	Bootcloser
	Second	Blacksmith
	Third	Not given
	Fourth	Compositer
English Grammar	Silver Medal	Shopman
	Second	Clerk
French	Silver Medal	Shopman
	Second	Student
	Third	Clerk
	Fourth	Millwright
Arithmetic	Silver Medal	Clerk
	Second	Grocer
	Third	Shopman
	Fourth	Not given
Writing	Silver Medal	Writer (25)

(25) The North of Scotland Gazette, 8th April, 1851

This is virtually a list of clerical workers, tradesmen and skilled artisans. It is this class of respectable white-collar workers and skilled artisans in regular employment who took advantage of the subscription associations. Through Savings Banks and Friendly Societies they had already acquired the idea of regular saving on a small scale. (26) It must be remembered that this section represented a considerable proportion of society. (27) Many of these institutes and associations organised subscription clubs and were at pains to point out that they were open to members of the working classes. The Association at Weymouth saw a curious reversal of this pattern. Its chairman was a Mr. R. Thomas, a local baker, and he felt it necessary to point out that the club would accept not only members of the working classes, it would accept tradesmen as well. (28) But the Folkestone club was rather more typical. It had been set up by the Mayor, Mr. R. Hart. Subscriptions were 9d. per week and it was anticipated that a three day excursion would cost £1-3s. Support may have been limited for it was found necessary to point out that the club was, "open to all those popularly known as the labouring classes." (29)

In a number of cases a much wider membership was aimed at and the level of subscription was varied to cater for the different financial capabilities of the members. The varying

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(26) P. H. J. H. Gosden, Self-Help: Voluntary Associations in Nineteenth Century Britain, London, 1973

(27) G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, London, 1965, pp. 120/1

(28) The Journal of the Exhibition, 8th March, 1851

(29) ibid., 1st February, 1851

sums collected would allow for excursions of different lengths and for different classes on the railways. In Douglas, on the Isle of Man, the association had varying levels of subscription and was planning to provide excursions varying in cost from £4 to £12. (30) In Saffron Walden a group of workers came together and formed an association without any outside assistance. By the end of November 1850 there were 48 members, 1 paying 2s. per week, 1 paying 1s. 6d., one paying 1s., 37 paying 6d. and 8 paying the minimum of 3d. (31) In Kidderminster several clubs were organised by foremen in the factories who collected the money from the men they supervised. As a result of this initiative most of the employers had promised their workers a week's holiday and some took on the responsibility of organising lodgings for their workpeople. (32)

In some towns the Friendly Societies and similar organisations did all the preparation. In Holbeck it was the Adult Mutual Improvement Society and in Worthing an association was formed by nearly 100 members of the Loyal Victoria Lodge of the Order of Odd Fellows. (33) The Wiltshire Friendly Society organised a very large excursion when it brought 300 people from Melksham, 300 from Swindon and 800 from Chippenham on 7th August. (34)

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(30) ibid., 1st February, 1851

(31) ibid., 23rd November, 1850

(32) ibid., 7th December, 1850

(33) ibid., 7th December, 1850

(34) The Railway Times, 9th August, 1851

The work of these local associations was of great importance in helping to ensure the success of the Great Exhibition. For many people up and down the country, but particularly those of the working classes and the lower middle class, not yet used to lengthy journeys across the country, although well enough accustomed to day excursions by rail, the prospect of going to London to visit an industrial exhibition must have appeared forbidding. The associations helped to overcome these fears by providing information about the journey, the lodgings, the meals and all the details of that kind. They provided a sense of security that the whole affair was 'organised', so that nothing could go wrong. The association in Ashton-under-Lyne had some 300 members in November 1850 and they wee planning a one week trip costing £2-10s. The fare would be 15s., another 10s. 6d. would provide lodgings for 7 nights, breakfast and supper at the lodgings would cost 14s. and the remaining 10s. 6d. would provide meals during the day. The ordinary member of that association had very little to worry about after his subscription had been paid. (35)

This is not to say of course that every excursion run by every association was without accident and incident. In late June 1851 the secretary of the Exeter Exhibition Club had still not agreed a fare with the Bristol & Exeter Railway and the date of 5th July had not been finalised, to the understandable annoyance of the members. (36) The fare of 16s. 2d. which had been quoted in November 1850 was regarded as far too high and the Club was determined to have it reduced. (37)

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(35) Journal of the Exhibition, 23rd November, 1850

(36) The Western Times, 21st June, 1851

(37) The Journal of the Exhibition, 9th November, 1850

In this they were successful for the fare finally paid was 7s. 4d. (38) The date of 5th July was finally agreed on and on the great day, with thousands of spectators to see them depart, some 600 "expectant excursionists - easily identified by their carpet bags" (39) set off in 14 carriages drawn by 2 engines. Others joined at Wellington, Taunton and Bridgewater to swell the numbers of 1,000. The train went by Bristol and Swindon, where they were able to "admire the magnificent refreshment rooms for which this station is famous." (40) The journey took 7½ hours and passed without incident. All the excursionists found accommodation and all spent an enjoyable week in London. They appear to have been well treated even by the much abused drivers of cabs and omnibuses. They returned on Friday 11th July, but the train was overloaded and had to be divided, which caused some delay. The railway companies were still indulging their fondness for very long trains.

Despite these minor inconveniences the success of the excursion was so great that the Exeter Club remained hard at work. Another 500 excursionists went on 26th July and this trip appears to have passed without incident. (41) A final excursion was planned for 16th August. On this occasion first-class carriages were available in addition to the usual second-class and the return fare for the first-class seats was below the usual single fare. There were some 1,300 passengers in 27 carriages. (42) But this time there were prob-

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(38) The Western Times, 19th July, 1851

(39) ibid., 12th July, 1851

(40) ibid., 12th July, 1851

(41) ibid., 2nd August, 1851

(42) ibid., 23rd August, 1851

lems and one of the excursionists wrote an angry letter to the Western Times promising that he would never use another excursion train, "excursionists appear to have much the standing with rail companies and their servants, that a negro excursion train might be supposed to have if taking a trip in South Carolina. I think cattle would have had more consideration." (43) These complaints did not prevent the Club from organising another extra excursion on 13th September and this turned out to be the biggest of all. Since it was an unexpected addition to the programme, it seems reasonable to suppose that some of those in this last group were paying a second visit. It is interesting to note too that so many people were able to pay for this excursion at short notice. Three engines pulled 42 carriages and another 10 were added at Bridgewater to give a total of 2,800 passengers. The train was overloaded and arrived several hours late in London. On the return the passengers were split into two trains which arrived on time without incident. (44)

The Exeter Exhibition Club and some of the smaller clubs of the surrounding area were thus responsible for sending some 5,600 people to london and, although there was some inconvenience and delay, there were no serious problems. It is worth noting that the Exeter Temperance Society also engaged a train for its own members. Some 700/800 people in this group went to London on 2nd August and returned 7 days later. (45) Without the reassurance of these associations these people might not have had the courage to face the unknown perils of a journey

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(43) ibid., 16th August, 1851

(44) ibid., 20th September, 1851

(45) ibid., 2nd August, 1851

to London.

The associations were also valuable in another way. They provided firm evidence that people would attend the Exhibition. They sprang into being at a time when the Exhibition Commissioners were still working hard to raise money for the Exhibition; their existence was reported in the newspapers in the same pages as the news about the amounts of money being subscribed. This helped to create an atmosshere in the autumn of 1850 that, despite all the problems, despite the objections, the Exhibition would take place and people would come to see it. The clubs were evidence that businessmen, railway directors, steamship company directors, lodging housekeepers, omnibus proprietors, guidebook publishers and many others could expect increased business from the visitors. There was even an increase in the demand for brass bedsteads in Birmingham as the keepers of lodging houses prepared for the increased trade. (46) The eventual success of the Exhibition has obscured the intensity the opposition faced by Prince Albert and his colleagues. Many factors contributed to the defeat of that opposition, although the Queen reserved the bulk of the credit for the Prince, "Albert's temper, patience, firmness and energy surmounted all," she wrote to her uncle, King Leopold. (47) But the Prince did not work alone. His colleagues gave loyal support. Sir Robert Peel's death roused emotional support in the House of Commons, for he had been a strong supporter of the Exhibition. Paxton's design was published in the Illustrated London News and copied by newspapers across the country to capture the national imag-

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(46) Illustrated London News, 29th March, 1851

(47) Queen Victoria's Early Letters, London, 1963, p. 184

ination. Many such factors combined together to ensure that the Exhibition would take place and one of these was the growth of excursion clubs in the summer and autumn of 1850, since these clubs did prove that, if the Exhibition did take place, considerable numbers of people would attend from every corner of the country so that the Exhibition would not have to depend solely on a London audience.

The effects of these associations on the railway companies is worth a separate mention. The companies were quite used to providing excursions for organised groups with fares, numbers etc. being settled in advance. The conditions under which the club members would be carried were quickly settled in the autumn of 1850. Captain Huish, General Manager of the London & North Western Railway and the key figure in the union of companies known as the 'Confederacy', seems to have played a part in this by writing to the other companies likely to be heavily involved. No great persuasion was required. The Traffic Committee of the Great Northern Railway, one of the main rivals of the London & North Western, appear to have accepted the arrangements recommended by Huish with little discussion. (48)

But on 14th December, 1850 Colonel Reid, secretary of the Executive Committee wrote a letter to The Times warning people that the rail concessions would apply only to club members. Readers who were considering a visit were advised to join or form clubs. The effects of this are difficult to assess. The railway companies were quite willing to assist the associations, but they were curiously unwilling, bearing

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(48) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Railway Traffic Committee, GN1, Piece 239, 8th October, 1850

in mind the growth of excursion traffic in the 1840's, to involve themselves in running excursions open to the general public. The companies may have believed that there would be very little excursion traffic beyond that provided by the associations. If this were the case, that belief was soon to be shattered in the months of June and July.

But, in many respects the most interesting feature of these associations is the way in which they were encouraged and assisted by politicians, civic leaders, industrialists and landowners. The motives for this assistance were obvious to contemporaries, "the amount of good feeling thus engendered or perpeturated between the employers and the employed, arising out of the assistance rendered, and ready co-operation given by the latter to the former, is a most delightful feature." (49)

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(49) Illustrated London News, 12th July, 1851

Chapter 5

Railway Competition for the Excursion Traffic.

The Exhibition opened on 1st May and it did not at first appear that its supporters' optimism would be justified. For most of May admissions by season ticket holders outnumbered those by visitors paying at the door. The cost of admission fell to one shilling on Monday 26th May, but the numbers did not at once increase. Large crowds had been expected and there was a fear of disorder. (1) This may well have persuaded many into staying away. It was Thursday 29th May before the numbers rose substantially; of the 51,888 visitors, only 4,370 were holders of season tickets. The numbers then remained at that level for the next two weeks, and not until 16th June did the daily total exceed 60,000.

It thus seemed that the caution of the railway companies had been fully justified. In May neither traffic nor receipts showed any dramatic increase. The income of the Great Western Railway was only 5.16% higher than it had been in May of the previous year. The comparable increase for the London & South Western Railway was 6.55% and for the London & North Western Railway 2.46%. (2) This was little more than might have been expected without the Exhibition. Much of this extra traffic seems to have been made up of the wealthy upper classes for whom an appearance in London at this time was a social necessity. There was a considerable traffic in private carriages by train. On Tuesday 6th May, for instance, no

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(1) Lord Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life, London, 1911, Volume 6, p. 280

(2) The Railway Times, 18th October, 1851

fewer than 53 of these were brought from Manchester to London. (3) There were special excursions at reduced fares, but they were not aimed at the mass of the population. The Reverend N. Thomson of Queen's College and the Reverend R. Walker of Wadham College, Oxford wrote to the Board of the Great Western Railway asking the Company to run a special train for men from the University, "who may wish to visit the Exhibition previously to the charge of admission being reduced, in order that they may avoid the crowd consequent thereon." (4) The Board was sympathetic to this request and the train was arranged for Wednesday 21st May. This, however, clashed with a meeting of Convocation and the excursion was postponed until Saturday 24th May. The first-class fare was fixed at 10s. 4d. and the second-class at 6s. Excursions open to the general public were also run. The Great Western Railway ran excursions from Bristol, Bath and Chippenham on Tuesday 27th May and Wednesday 28th May, and from Cheltenham and Gloucester on Thursday 29th May. The first-class fare was £1 and the second-class 15s. (5) But these mid-week excursions were not well patronised. (6) Some of the newspapers began to wonder if the popularity of the Exhibition had been over-estimated. Working-class visitors would not only have to face the expense of the journey; they would also lose wages while away. Children would have

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(3) The Times, 9th May, 1851

(4) British Transport Archives, Great Western Railway Board Minutes, Rail 250, Piece 5, 15th May, 1851

(5) ibid., 22nd May, 1851

(6) The Leeds Times, 7th June, 1851

to be taken or arrangements would have to be made for them to be cared for. One paper took the view that "the working people of this country are in no condition in considerable numbers to incur such expenses." (7) But later events were to prove that this was not so. The admissions in May and early June were low for a variety of reasons. People were waiting to see if the cost of admission would be reduced further and if the railway companies would provide trains at lower fares. In the newspapers there were constant references to the arrival of new exhibits, which must have created the impression that the Exhibition was not yet complete and the wise visitor should wait.

By June this fear was no longer valid. The bulk of the exhibits were in place and the railway companies began to take a more active role in providing excursions at reduced fares. Two major factors appear to have influenced the attitude of the companies: the activities of the steamship companies and the bitterness of the rivalries among many of the railway companies themselves.

Many cheap guide books were circulating in 1850 and 1851 for the benefit of prospective visitors to London. The amount of information given depended naturally on the size and price of the book, but most of them did provide information about the regular steamship services between London and the major British and European ports. It is impossible to establish how widely these guide books were read but if the number produced is any indication, the circulation may well have been considerable. They were certainly widely advertised in local newspapers, as were the steamship services and it was through the local newspapers, after the

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(7) ibid., 7th June, 1851

Exhibition actually opened, that the steamship companies began to present a much greater threat. They began to offer reduced fares and a service that the competing railway companies could not possibly match.

In early April the Dundee, Perth & London Steamship Company was offering excursions from Perth and Dundee. A first-class cabin cost £5-5s. and a second-class cabin cost £3-16-6d. (8) This covered not only the return fare, for the ship also served as a lodging house, providing bed and breakfast for five days in London. Within days the Steam Navigation Company offered a slightly better service from Aberdeen. Passengers were offered a week in London with a first-class cabin costing £5 and a second-class £3. (9) The Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Company quickly responded by reducing the price of its first-class cabins to £4-3-d. (10) This competition could hardly be ignored by the railway companies. The Aberdeen Railway Company announced its own fare reductions. The first-class return fare became £3-19-6d., the second-class £2-18s. and the third-class only £1-10s. (11) The local newspapers were impressed and carefully pointed out to their readers what this would involve. The train journey of 542 miles from Aberdeen to London took just under 17 hours. With 40 stops of about five minutes each, the actual running time was 13 hours and 34 minutes giving an average running speed of 40 miles per hour. (12) One local newspaper concluded that "persons of limited means,

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(8) The Montrose Standard, 11th April, 1851

(9) The North of Scotland Gazette, 29th April, 1851

(10) The Montrose Standard, 9th May, 1851

(11) The North of Scotland Gazette, 13th May, 1851

(12) ibid., 13th May, 1851

and good strong constitutions, who have little time to spare, will choose the journey by land. Others who prefer ease of body, and freedom of action, at the risk of sea sickness" would prefer to travel by sea. (13) Sea Sickness could, of course, be a problem and there were those who were to regret making that choice. (14) But the rail journey also had disadvantages:

> "it is pleasant to find oneself in London in less than a day; but sitting bolt upright in a third-class carriage for three-and-twenty hours, even with the help of an air pillow which does not leak (as some of them do) is fatiguing enough in all conscience." (15)

The competition from the steamship companies clearly alarmed the railway companies and did lead to the provision of better services and reduced fares. Little could be done to match the provision of accommodation, but at least one major railway company did give serious thought to the situation. The General Manager of the Great Northern Railway, Seymour Clarke, presented a proposal to the Board that a warehouse at Kings Cross be equipped as a dormitory for visitors using the line and attending the Exhibition. But this must have seemed too extravagant to the directors. The proposal was rejected. (16)

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(13) The Aberdeen Journal, 12th July, 1851

(14) The Montrose Review, 25th July, 1851, letter from 'Young Forfarshire'

(15) The Aberdeen Journal, 12th July, 1851

(16) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Railway Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 4th March, 1851

The other factor which led the railway companies to improve services and reduce fares was the background of distrust and rivalry which already existed among many of the companies. The 1840's had been a period of intense competition. Hostility between many of the companies had been so strong that it produced an attitude that, if one company provided a service, a rival company felt obliged to duplicate or better that service. (17) The most spectacular of these rivalries arose between the Confederacy, an alliance of companies built round the London & North Western Railway and the Midland Railway on the one hand, and the recently completed Great Northern Railway on the other. The latter offered a shorter and faster route to Yorkshire and the north from London. This rivalry was to have a considerable affect on the success of the Exhibition.

At first, however, it seemed as though the companies would be able to work together in dealing with the Exhibition traffic. As early as April 1850 Colonel Reid, Secretary to the Exhibition Commissioners, had written to the main companies asking for the "assistance of Railway Companies in conveying at moderate fares the Working Classes to and from London on the occasion of the Exhibition." (18) The request roused little interest at that early stage and, in the case of the Great Northern Railway, the matter was simply passed to the

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(17) ibid., Piece 71, 13th August, 1850, Item 39, 'Resolved that the proposition for a special train is approved and confirmed - and that fares be lowered only in case the proceedings of the London and North Western and Midland Companies render it necessary.'

(18) ibid., Piece 16, 27th April, 1850

General Manager, Seymour Clarke. But as the year progressed, more serious negotiations took place between Colonel Reid and Captain Mark Huish, General Manager of the London & North Western Railway, on the terms which should be offered to the various subscription clubs which had sprung up across the country. (19) Huish obviously saw himself as a spokesman for all the companies for he then wrote to most of the main companies asking them to accept the terms he had agreed. Most seem to have been content to do so. Even the directors of the Great Northern Railway accepted his recommendations. (20) Only the directors of the South Eastern were hostile and ignored his letter. (21) The companies were used to running excursions with organised groups and they were willing to co-operate. The Exhibition Commissioners, however, wanted rather more than this. They asked the companies to examine the possibility of running excursions for the general public while the Exhibition was open. This proposal was put to those companies which were members of the Railway Clearing House at a meeting on 3rd March 1851 (22) The Committee of the Clearing House agreed to summon a meeting of the General Managers of the member companies on 22nd March for them to discuss the idea. The response of the managers showed that they had still not fully appreciated the potential value of the excursion traffic that could develop if the working classes

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(19) Chapter IV, above

(20) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Traffic Committee, GN1, Piece 239, 8th October, 1850

(21) ibid., South Eastern Board, SER1, Piece 26, 16th September, 1850

(22) ibid., 22nd September, 1850

were encouraged to take advantage of reduced fares. They decided that the problems were insuperable and would agree only to discuss the issue again at a later date.

This was done on 30th April and at this meeting several important decisions were taken. By that date the managers were aware of the threat of competition from the steamship companies. (23) They decided, therefore, that they would run excursion trains at reduced fares and that this traffic would begin on 1st July. (24) The position of the excursion clubs was also considered and it was agreed that the families of members would also be carried at club rates, with children under 12 years being carried at half the excursion fare. This was a considerable step forward, but it was not enough to satisfy Joseph Paxton. Paxton was determined that the working classes should enjoy the full benefits of the Exhibition. (25) He had already caused a considerable stir in the press by proposing that admission to the Exhibition should be free after the first two weeks. (26) He now made use of his position as a director of the Midland Railway to attend a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Midland Railway and the

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(23) P. Bagwell, The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy, London, 1968, p. 56

(24) The London & South Western Railway, for example, was concerned about the steamship companies using the ports of the South West coast. See British Transport Archives. London & South Western Commercial Committee, LSWR1, Piece 162, 14th March, 1851.

(25) British Transport Archives, Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western Railway, Rail 406, Piece 162, 14th March, 1851

(26) A. Bird, Paxton's Palace, London, 1975, p. 122

London & North Western Railway on 8th May. There he complained bitterly about the decision not to start the excursion trains until 1st July and said,

> "that the harvest season would prevent large numbers of persons from being able to attend the Exhibition: and that as the number of persons coming was so great the accession of traffic could not be conveniently worked if its commencement was delayed until the 1st July and thus the whole of the cheap trains be thrown into the second half of the year." (27)

Huish accepted Paxton's reasoning, but he refused to break the agreements he had made at the Clearing House. He "stated that while he was bound, so long as the regulation was unrepealed, to obey it - his personal opinion was, it would be beneficial to commence the cheap trips at a somewhat earlier period." (28) Huish agreed to ask for a special meeting at the Clearing House as soon as possible to put forward Paxton's request for an earlier start to the Excursion traffic. This meeting was held on 22nd May. Paxton himself attended and was successful in persuading the managers to bring forward the starting date for excursions to 2nd June. (29) But this process of negotiation and civilised discussion was already being overtaken by

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(27) Illustrated London News, 25th January, 1851, letter from Joseph Paxton.

(28) British Transport Archives, Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 8th May, 1851

(29) Bagwell, op. cit., p. 57

events as the traditional rivalries between many of the companies began to assert themselves.

The London & South Western Railway and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway were rivals for the traffic of the south coast, but at first both companies were prepared to abide by the decisions made at the Clearing House. The Commercial Committee of the London & South Western considered a proposal on 25th April 1851 that it should run an excursion train at half fare on 1st May, but "resolved that this Committee are not at present inclined to adopt special arrangements involving lower fares than the established scale, to induce passengers to come up to the Exhibition." (30) The directors of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway had agreed months before to abide by the decisions of the Clearing House Committee, (31) but when they received a copy of minutes dealing with the excursion trains from the Clearing House Committee on 12th May, it is interesting that no comment was then recorded in their own minutes. (32) On 23rd May, the day after the meeting at the Clearing House which Paxton attended, the Commercial Committee agreed to accept the decisions made there and to open discussions with the Great Western Railway and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway about a common policy on fares. (33) But,

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(30) British Transport Archives, London & South Western Commercial Committee, LSWR1, Piece 162, 25th April, 1851

(31) ibid., London, Brighton & South Coast Railway Board Minutes, LSB1, Piece 68, 14th October, 1850

(32) ibid., 12th May, 1851

(33) ibid., London & South Western Commercial Committee, LSWR1, Piece 162, 23rd May, 1851

it was too late; if any such discussions did take place, they did not succeed. On 4th July the Commercial Committee was informed of advertisements which said that the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway "propose to put on an excursion train to the Exhibition at very much lower fares than we have adopted or than the Managers of the Combined Railways at the Clearing House recommend as justified." (34) The decision which followed was to be very common in the summer of 1851: "under these circumstances the Traffic Manager was authorised to take corresponding measures to prevent undue subtraction of traffic from the Company's line." (35)

The most intense competition, however, was to emerge in Yorkshire and the Midlands with the London & North Western Railway and the Midland Railway ranged against the Great Northern Railway. The third-class return fare from Leeds, Wakefield and Sheffield fell as low as 5s. and, "it would probably not have stopped at that figure had not the Great Northern excursion agent at Leeds put out a notice that whatever fare the London & North Western and Midland Companies might charge, the Great Northern would carry passengers for 6d. less." (36) F. S. Williams has commented, "the competition of the Great Northern Company led to the adoption of such low rates that the wonder was that the lines paid at all. From Leeds to London for 5s. was merely a nominal fare; yet it was found that 5s. with full

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(34) ibid., 4th July, 1851

(35) ibid., 4th July, 1851

(36) C. H. Grinling, History of the Great Northern Railway, London, revised 1966, p. 103

trains was remunerative." (37) The implication here is not only that the Great Northern Railway was responsible for beginning and sustaining the competition, but also that there was an element of chance in the whole affair, with considerable decisions being made by staff at local levels.

A more recent historian seemed to imply that the real cause was the dilatoriness of Mr. Gladstone and the competition from the steamship companies operating from Hull. (38) The Great Northern Railway and the allied companies of the Confederacy agreed to ask Gladstone to arbitrate between them. But the companies became alarmed by the low fares being offered by sea from Hull and began to cut fares long before Gladstone made his award in August. By the time the award was made, so much distrust had been built up between the companies that most of them then did their best to evade its terms. All this is certainly true, but part of the truth is missing from this version. The Great Northern Railway made very effective use of the Exhibition traffic to strengthen its position against the Confederacy.

The Great Northern was the newest of the great companies and it had come into being in spite of furious opposition, not least from Captain Huish. (39) After defeating this opposition in Parliament, the Great Northern then had to

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(37) F. S. Williams, The Midland Railway: its Rise and Progress, London, 1888, p. 98

(38) E. G. Barnes, The Rise of the Midland Railway, 1844-1874, London, 1966, p. 133

(39) H. J. Dyos & D. H. Aldcroft, British Transport, London, 1974, p. 139

fight for a share of the traffic between London and Yorkshire by providing faster, more comfortable and convenient services. Most of its rolling stock was new and, since it had been established after the 1844 Act, it had never had a stock of open third-class carriages. But, despite this advantage, the Company did have to struggle and match its policies to those of its rivals. (40) It was able to operate its through route from London to York and Edinburgh, but the hostility of the Confederacy made it very difficult to transfer its passengers to the lines of other companies at vital junctions like Leeds, Wakefield, Retford and Edinburgh. (41) This was a considerable limitation and one that the Company was anxious to overcome. The events of 1851 seemed to give it an opportunity to do so. To begin with it was quite prepared to accept Huish's arrangements for the excursion clubs. (42) But there was considerable annoyance in February 1851, when the Traffic Committee was informed that the Midland Railway had run a cheap excursion from Yorkshire to London called "The First

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(40) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Executive Committee, Rail 236, Piece 71, 13th August, 1850. During a discussion about running special trains to York Races, it was resolved "that the proposition for a special train is approved and confirmed - and that fares be lowered only in case the proceedings of the London & North Western and Midland Companies render it necessary."

(41) Perkin, op. cit., p. 190

(42) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Traffic Committee, GN1, Piece 239, 8th October, 1850

Trip to the Crystal Palace," without giving prior notice to the other companies. The Committee was angered by this and decided that if it happened again, "the General Manager be authorised to act in these matters as he may in his discretion see fit." (43) But no other disagreements emerged and for a time the dispute died away.

The peace, however, did not last long. Operational necessity had forced the rival companies to conclude certain local agreements to allow the transfer of traffic. On 13th March the members of the Joint Committee of the Midland Railway and the London & North Western Railway were informed that Seymour Clarke, the General Manager of the Great Northern, had written to say that all such agreements were to be terminated on 4th April. (44) Huish was authorised to offer a new agreement more favourable to the Great Northern and to last five years, but the Great Northern refused to make terms. It clearly felt that its more direct route to the north had placed it in a position of strength, and it was using this as a lever to gain access to all the routes operated by the Confederacy. Huish then offered an agreement that would operate only during the period of the Exhibition. The Great Northern Chairman, Mr. Edmund Dennison, refused with the telling comment that, "the lines had been made and the Traffic must take its course." (45) The Great Northern made it clear that it would exercise its own judgement on fares, but the Confederacy persisted in trying to reach agreement and suggested that all their problems

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(43) ibid., 7th February, 1851

(44) ibid., Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 13th March, 1851

(45) ibid., 22nd March, 1851

of access and traffic-sharing should be sent to arbitration. In judging the good faith of Huish, described by one historian as a "completely ruthless schemer," (46) and the Confederacy, it should be remembered that it was at this time that he, in the privacy of his boardroom, was refusing to placate Paxton by breaking the agreements he had made at the Railway Clearing House. (47) To resolve the problem of the Exhibition traffic, the offer of arbitration was accepted by the Great Northern and both sides agreed to ask Mr. William Gladstone. (48) This agreement was made on 25th June. (49) But, at the same time as the directors of the Great Northern decided to accept this arbitration, they apparently saw no contradiction in giving the General Manager full power "according to circumstances, to make the best arrangements he can as to the traffic for July." (50) Clarke was to make full use of this freedom.

As an interim measure while Gladstone examined the situation, a temporary agreement to limit the number of excursion trains was signed between Huish and Clarke, although it would appear that Clarke, while prepared to accept this limited interim agreement, was less willing to accept the settlement of the Exhibition traffic being prepared by Gladstone. Certainly within five days of Gladstone's award the number

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(46) Barnes, op. cit., p. 133

(47) British Transport Archives, Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 8th May, 1851

(48) ibid., 9th April, 1851

(49) ibid., 29th June, 1851

(50) ibid., Great Northern Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 25th June, 1851

of excursion trains being offered by the Great Northern was increasing and the fares were falling. On 10th July Clarke quite blatantly admitted in a letter to Huish, "having deviated from the Agreement" and went to express "an intention of running a greater number of trains than the Agreement provided for." (51) The Joint Committee was forced to warn its parent Boards that the agreement prepared by Gladstone had been terminated and the Companies must take whatever action they thought best. (52) Both companies naturally followed the example of the Great Northern and increased the number of trains they were offering. This was reflected in the admissions at the Crystal Palace. On the one shilling days in the first two days of July the admissions had averaged 57,000 per day; in the remainder of the month this rose to 62,500 and on the 15th and the 21st July admissions exceeded 70,000 for the first time. The reaction of the Confederacy gave Clarke the excuse to report to his Board that he was facing increased competition and the Board responded in typical fashion, "the General Manager be authorised to arrange the excursion trains as he considers best." (53)

This turn of events alarmed the Confederacy and a series of meetings was held in late July. The Great Northern sent proposals to limit the competition and share the traffic. These were rejected by the Joint Committee, which in turn felt obliged to formulate its own proposals. The members

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(51) ibid., Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 10th July, 1851

(52) ibid., 10th July, 1851

(53) ibid., Great Northern Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 15th July, 1851

decided to write to Clarke asking him to convene a meeting of his Board as soon as possible and put their proposals to his directors. (54) Clarke's reply was very cool. He claimed that an immediate meeting was impossible and that no meeting could be held before 5th August. He also pointed out that "this being too late for the August arrangements, I must necessarily make them independently." (55) One is reminded of the comment,

> "In the internal organisation of the companies, there was for more than twenty years an imperfect definition of the authority of the various officials, so that responsibility for errors could not be fixed; reports were not rendered to the higher officials frequently enough for their guidance; there was a lack of discipline in carrying out regulations and orders." (56)

In this case, however, Clarke had gone too far and he was not supported by his own Board. The Joint Committee and the Board of the Great Northern met independently on 29th July. The Joint Committee representatives first occupied themselves with a long review of what had just happened. The Companies had signed an agreement in good faith, but "the Great Northern Company, within five days, and without the slightest intimation of any such intention,

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(54) ibid., Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 22nd July, 1851

(55) ibid., 24th July, 1851

(56) W. J. Jackman, The Development of Transportation in Modern England, London, 1962, p. 599

totally disregarded and set at nought the terms of the agreement thus entered into." (57) A letter from the Great Northern Board putting the blame for the fare cutting on the Confederacy was rejected and it was recorded that:

> "the Joint Committee have it in evidence that the first reduction in fares was made by the Great Northern Company between Milford Junction and London, at rates so low as to divert the traffic from the Midland Line; to counteract this it became necessary to make a reduction at Normanton. The Great Northern then reduced at Knottingley, which being within a few miles of Leeds, a reduction at that town necessarily followed." (58)

Even worse, although the people of Leeds would not have seen it in that sense, the Great Northern had then, "issued a notice to the effect that the rates by their line would be 6d. lower than the fares via the Midland and London & North Western route." (59) It is worth recording that the directors of the Great Northern were later to admit that this interpretation by the Joint Committee was correct. (60) On the following day the Joint Committee again met and gave the Company Managers full powers, "to protect the interests of their respective Companies and to meet the competition of

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(57) British Transport Archives, Joint Committee of the Midland and London & North Western, Rail 406, Piece 7, 29th July, 1851

(58) ibid., 29th July, 1851

(59) ibid., 29th July, 1851

(60) ibid., 7th August, 1851

of the Great Northern Company." (61)

The directors of the Great Northern had also met on 29th July. Little time seems to have been spent on reviewing the situation and the real intentions to the Company were made plain:

> "Until the whole system of the Great Northern lines is made open, and the treaties for their exclusion from other lines are withdrawn by the London & North Western and Midland Companies, it is impracticable to arbitrate." (62)

The directors further stated that they could not "pledge to abstain from competition at those places to which, by such treaties, it is denied access by other lines." (63)

All three companies thus seemed to have occupied entrenched positions, but the collapse in fares had alarmed both sides. Personal contacts between the directors must have taken place the following day, for on the 31st July Edmund Denison was able to inform his Executive Committee that Gladstone had again agreed to arbitrate between the Companies, but that it had been impossible to get an agreement on the "immediate restoration of fares." (64) The aribitration would involve pooling the money received from excursion traffic and then sharing it according to a formula to be worked out by Gladstone, but it would cover only the traffic from the six towns, York, Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield,

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(61) ibid., 30th July, 1851

(62) ibid., Great Northern Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 29th July, 1851

(63) ibid., 29th July, 1851

(64) ibid., Great Northern Executive Committee Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 72, 31st July, 1851

Doncaster and Lincoln, from which there had been the fiercest competition. (65) The Confederacy made no concessions about access to their lines, so the victory seemed to lie on that side.

While Gladstone was at work the competition continued to rage. Clarke was given full authority on 25th August to make his plans for September. Trains were to be run from York, Sheffield, Lincoln and Doncaster on Mondays and Saturdays, from Peterborough on Thursdays and from Leeds and Wakefield on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Fares would not be announced in the handbills, they would be "regulated by the quotations of the North Western Company." (66) Clarke's timing was well chosen. Gladstone's award was announced on 27th August and the terms were highly favourable to the Great Northern Railway, "the general result being to give the new route 63% of the whole traffic pooled." (67) The confidence and aggression of the Great Northern appeared to have won. The Confederacy could not repudiate the terms that all three Companies had promised to accept, but Huish and his associates were not prepared to operate a settlement which they felt was unjust. Within days the agreement was in tatters. Passengers were encouraged not to travel from the six towns named in the agreement, but from smaller towns in the vicinity. The Confederacy was then under no obligation to pay their fares into the pool, thus denying the Great Northern its share of the proceeds.

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(65) Grinling, op. cit., p. 98

(66) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 25th August, 1851

(67) Grinling, op. cit., p. 106

The Board of the Great Northern complained about this breech of faith on 23rd September, (68) but since the Exhibition closed to the public on 11th October, it was much too late for anything effective to be done. Any agreement would have to concern traffic generally rather than a limited area like the Exhibition excursion traffic.

This failure in the summer of 1851 may well be considered as a great lost opportunity. If the railway companies had been able to co-operate more effectively over the Exhibition traffic, this might have laid the basis for a more general pattern of co-operation and rationalisation in the second half of the century. But the previous years of competition, and particularly the bitter struggles which attended the emergence of the Great Northern, had left too strong a legacy to be overcome in the hectic summer of 1851. One of the most note-worthy features of the 1850's was the way in which traffic managers evaded and broke agreements. (69) The behaviour of Seymour Clarke, and then later Mark Huish, in 1851 was an outstanding early example of this trend.

Some contemporaries did hope that the railway companies would learn from their experience in 1851. One newspaper made two suggestions of interest:

> "We hear the hope very generally expressed that the experience the railway companies have derived from the conveyance of the Exhibition traffic may induce a permanent

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(68) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 23rd September

(69) T. R. Gourvish, Mark Huish and the London & North Western, Leicester University Press, 1972, p. 164

reduction of fares. It is also suggested that there should be only two classes of carriages, instead of three, namely the first and the third. Many people would be inclined to indulge in the luxury - for such it really is - of journeying in a first-class carriage, if the fare were somewhat reduced; while the second-class scarcely offers any advantages over the third." (70)

But it would not be until the 1870's that the companies would accept that kind of advice.

It must, of course, be remembered that this inability to agree on fares and services was of great benefit to the passengers in 1851. One sentence in a report to the Traffic Committee of the Midland Railway is worth remembering:

"I regret to have to report deviation by the Great Northern Company from the agreed arrangements for excursion fares during the month of July, which has rendered it necessary for the London & North Western and Midland Cos. to give greater facilities from all points of competition." (71)

That regret would not have been shared by the hundreds of thousands of passengers who were able to take advantage of the reduced fares and ensure the success of the Exhibition.

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(70) The Leeds Times, 13th September, 1851

(71) British Transport Archives, Midland Railway Traffic Committee Minutes, MID1, Piece 137, 15th July, 1851

Chapter 6

Railway Passenger Traffic Generated by the Exhibition.

The Exhibition was open for a total of 142 possible visiting days between 1st May and 11th October. During that time the total number of visits recorded was 6,039,195, (1) but this cannot be interpreted directly as being the same as the number of actual visitors. It includes, for example, the 773,766 visits paid by the 25,605 holders of season tickets, an average of 30 visits each, and there is ample evidence from the diaries and biographies of the period of many middle and upper class individuals visiting the Crystal Palace more than once. Since, therefore, any figure for the actual number of visitors can be no more than an estimate, an examination of railway passenger traffic in 1851 might provide a useful figure for comparison. It was felt that if the figures for passenger traffic between 1844 and 1854 were examined and related to the increases in the mileage of track laid, a growth pattern might emerge. Within that pattern it might be possible to isolate a separate growth figure for 1851, which could be used as an estimate of the number of passengers travelling from outside London to visit the Exhibition.

A full list of the Parliamentary Papers from which data were extracted is given in Appendix b. The data varied in detail through the period 1842 to 1854, being available on either a six-monthly or a twelve-monthly basis. In a few cases numbers of fares for the same period were available from more than one source and the opportunity was taken to compare them, so that an idea of data reliability might be

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(1) Gibbs-Smith, op.cit., p. 33

formed. Several six-monthly figures were derived from twelve-monthly data, when the number of fares was recorded for the previous twelve months, but at six-monthly intervals.

In order to illustrate the importance of detecting patterns in data on the number of fares series in the type of analysis described here, other data have also been included. These are figures for the numbers of miles of track laid in twelve-monthly periods and these are dealt with briefly at the beginning of the data naalysis.

Included in returns submitted to Parliament between 1842 and 1854 was information on the numbers of fares and the mileage of available track. The figures for passenger traffic were available either as a category on their own, or in conjunction with the figures on accidents. The latter form of combined presentation was presumably to enable comparisons of accident rates to be made. Following the formation of the Railway Commission in August 1846, much more detailed information on the numbers and class of passengers became available. This information dates from 1847 and was presented in the form of the number of fares collected during six or twelve-monthly periods. One point to note is that these numbers included an unknown proportion of half-fares. The number of passengers involved must, for this reason, be rather higher than the number of fares recorded.

Route mileage data are shown in Table 1 and also, in graphical form, as a time series in Figure 1. Table 2 consists of numbers of fares data which are also plotted as time series in different ways on Figures 2, 3 4 and 5. (2)

The first set of data examined are those for miles of route laid in twelve-monthly periods shown in Table 1. Here, the mileage figures have to be accepted at face value, as

(2) There are doubts about the reliability of these mileage figures. See H. G. Lewin, The Railway Mania and its Aftermath 1845-1852, London, revised edition 1967.

there is no way of estimating their reliability. It must be borne in mind that errors of measurement would have existed.

Table 1. Miles of Route Laid in Twelve-Monthly Periods 1842-1853.

Date	Track Mileage Available	Track Mileage increase in previous twelve months
31 Dec 1842	1857	
31 Dec 1843	1952	95
31 Dec 1844	2343	391
31 Dec 1845	2765	422
31 Dec 1846	3036	271
30 June 1847	3603	838
31 Dec 1847	4433	1397
30 June 1848	4478	875
30 June 1849	5447	969
31 Dec 1849	6032	
30 June 1850	6308	861
31 Dec 1850	6621	589
30 June 1851	6698	390
31 Dec 1851	6890	269
30 June 1852	7076	378
31 Dec 1852	7336	446
31 Dec 1853	7641	305

Source: Parliamentary Papers (See Appendix b)

The data was inspected for a pattern through its time sequence. Figure 1 shows that the twelve-monthly mileages of track laid varied erratically reflecting the various upsurges of capital investment and building activity. Since the variations are so considerable, any assumption that there

FIGURE 1.

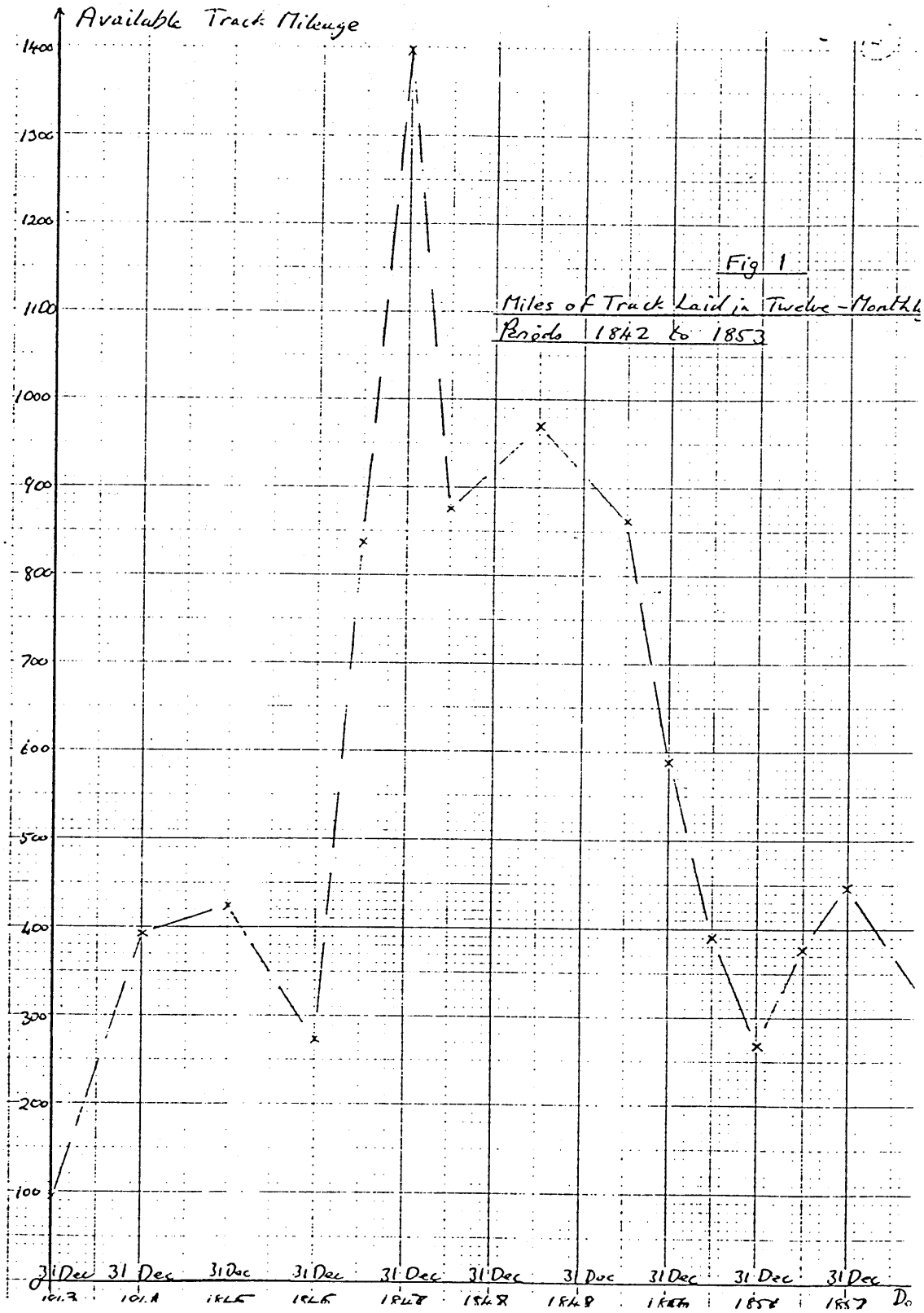

Available Track Mileage
1400
1300
1200
1100
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Fig 1
Miles of Track Laid in Twelve-Month
Periods 1842 to 1853
31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec 31 Dec
1841 1842 1843 1844 1845 1846 1847 1848 1849 1850 1851 1852 1853

Table 2

Numbers of Fares in Six or Twelve Monthly Periods from 1843 to 1853

Date at End of Period	Number of Fares During Period (1)	Number of Fares During Period (2)	Twelve-Monthly Numbers of Fares, from (3)	Difference Col.2-Col.4 for Twelve-Monthly Nos.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
30 June 1843	23 466 896			
30 June 1844	27 763 602			
30 June 1845	33 791 254			
30 June 1846	43 790 984			
30 June 1847	51 352 163	23 119 412		
31 Dec 1847		31 734 607		
30 June 1848	57 965 070½	26 330 492	58 065 099	- 100 028½
31 Dec 1848		31 524 641		
30 June 1849	60 398 159	28 761 895	60 286 536	+ 111 623
31 Dec 1849	63 841 539	34 924 419	63 686 364	+ 155 175
30 June 1850	66 840 175	31 881 703	66 806 172	+ 34 003
31 Dec 1850	72 854 422½	41 087 919½	72 969 622½	- 115 200
30 June 1851	* 37 881 703½	37 881 703		
31 Dec 1851	* 47 509 392	47 509 392	(3)	
30 June 1852	* 39 249 605½	39 249 605		
31 Dec 1852	49 886 123½	49 886 124		
30 June 1853		45 080 316 (4)		
31 Dec 1853	102 286 660	57 206 344 (5)		
30 June 1854	107 573 748	50 367 404		

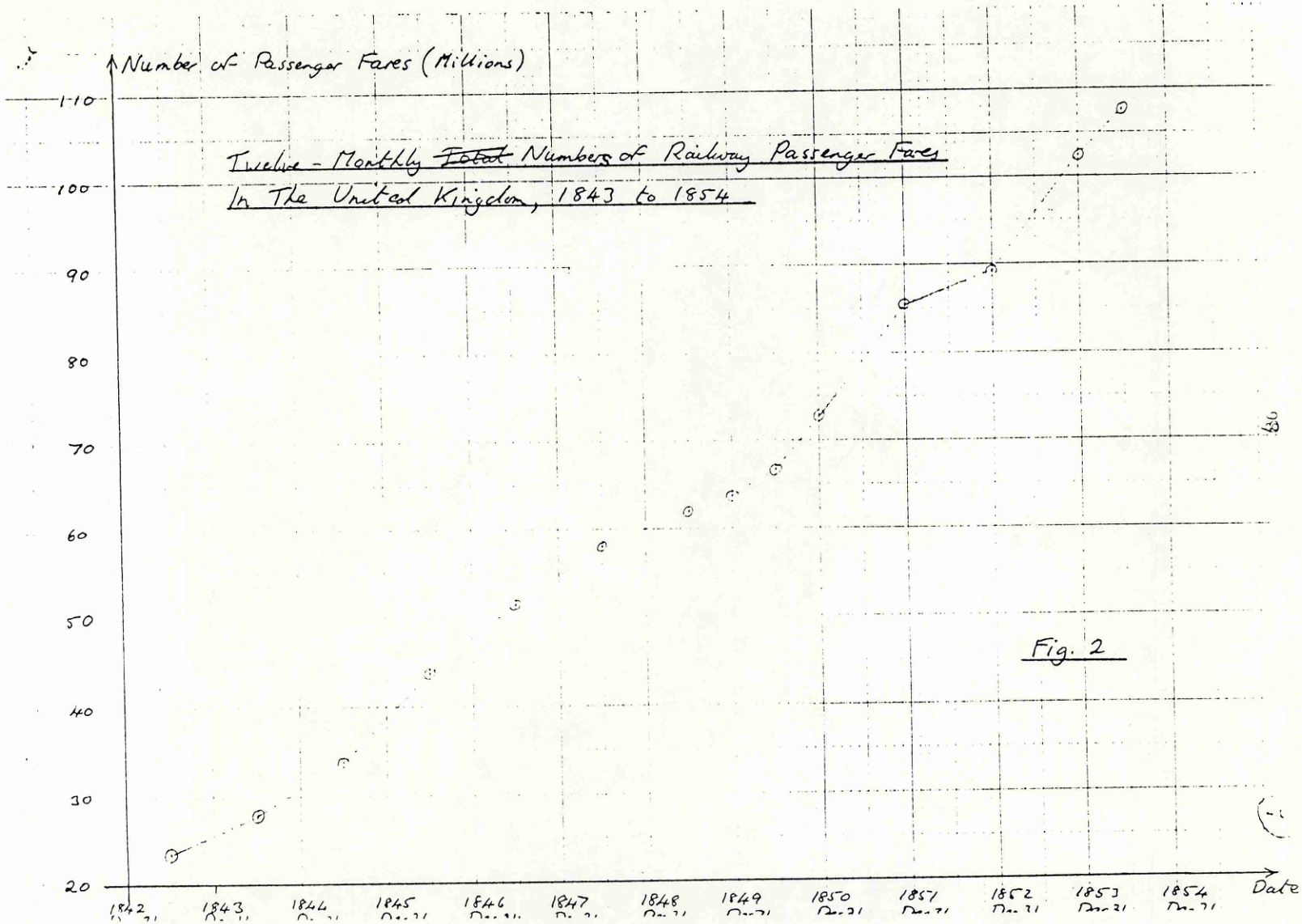
Source: Parliamentary Papers (see Appendix 1)

Footnotes to Table 2 (page 97)

(1) All figures in column (2) are 12 monthly totals except for the four entries marked *, that are 6 monthly totals.

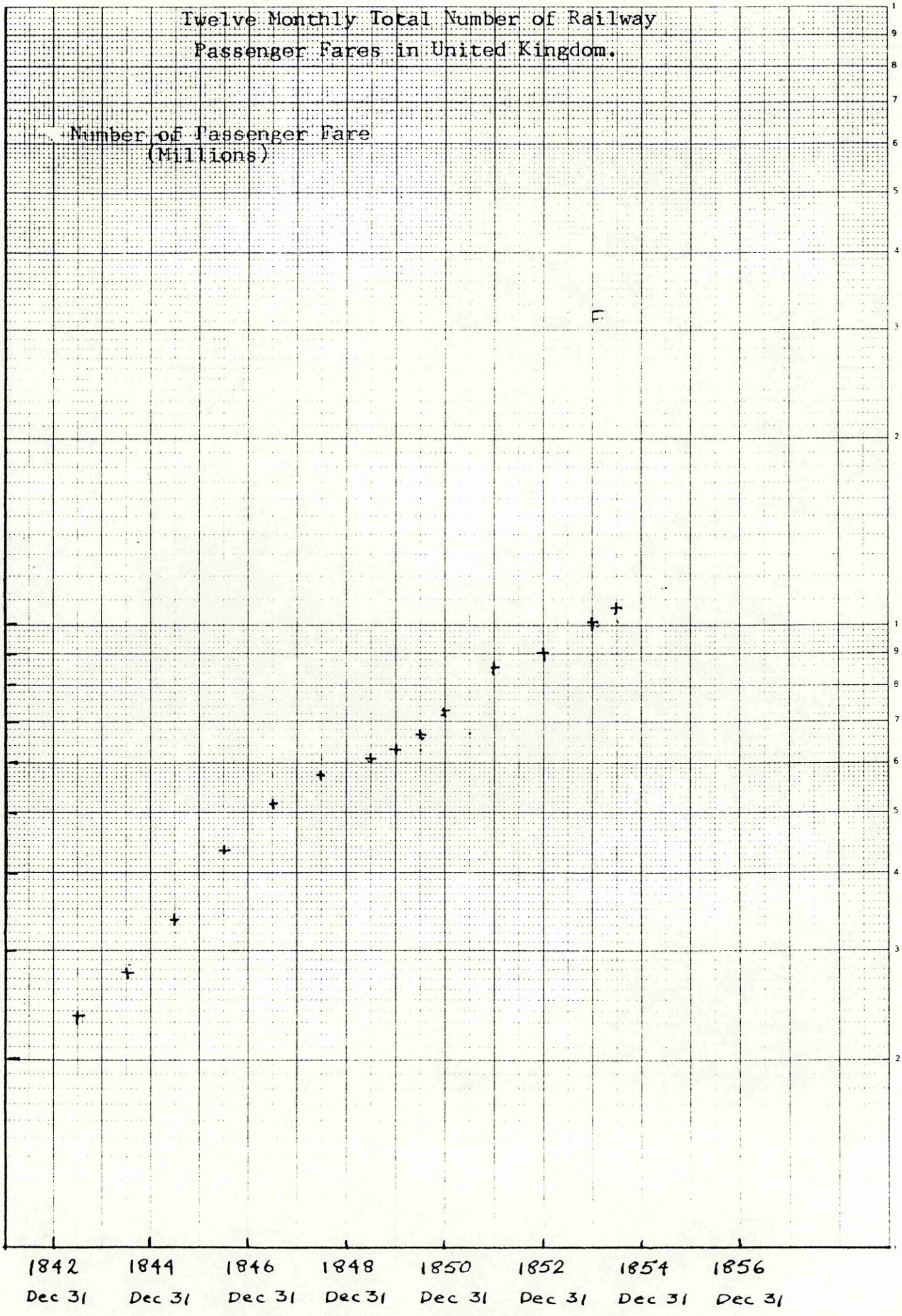
(2) All figures in column (3) are 6 monthly totals, extracted from accident statistics.

(3) To the nearest whole number, the entries in columns (2) and (3) now agree for four consecutive periods.



Twelve-Monthly ~~Total~~ Numbers of Railway Passenger Fares In The United Kingdom, 1843 to 1854

Fig. 2


Twelve Monthly Total Number of Railway
Passenger Fares in United Kingdom.
Number of Passenger Fare
(Millions)
1842
Dec 31
1844
Dec 31
1846
Dec 31
1848
Dec 31
1850
Dec 31
1852
Dec 31
1854
Dec 31
1856
Dec 31

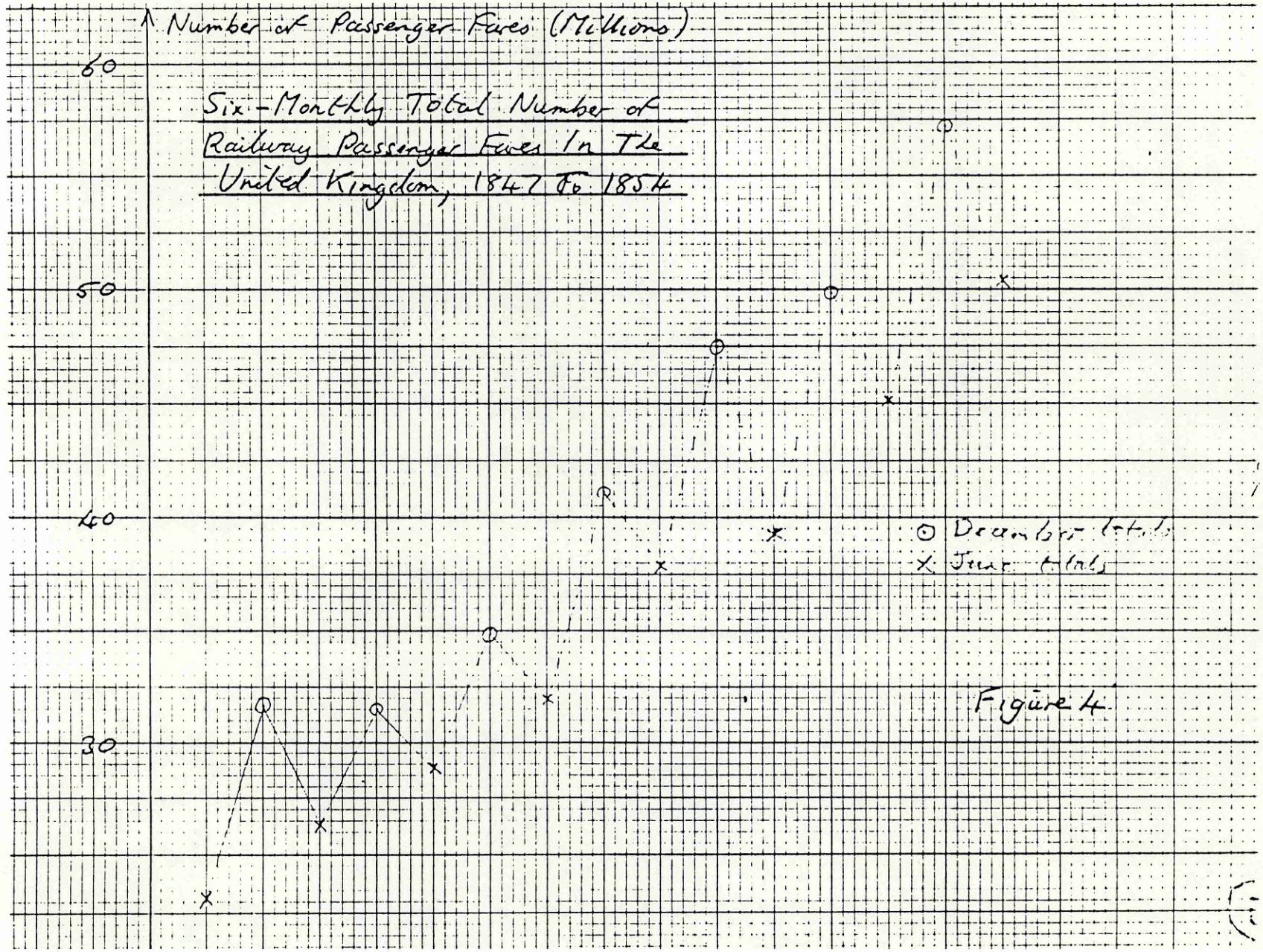

Number of Passenger Fares (Millions)
60
50
40
30
Six-Monthly Total Number of Railway Passenger Fares In The United Kingdom, 1842 To 1854
December totals
June totals

Figure 4

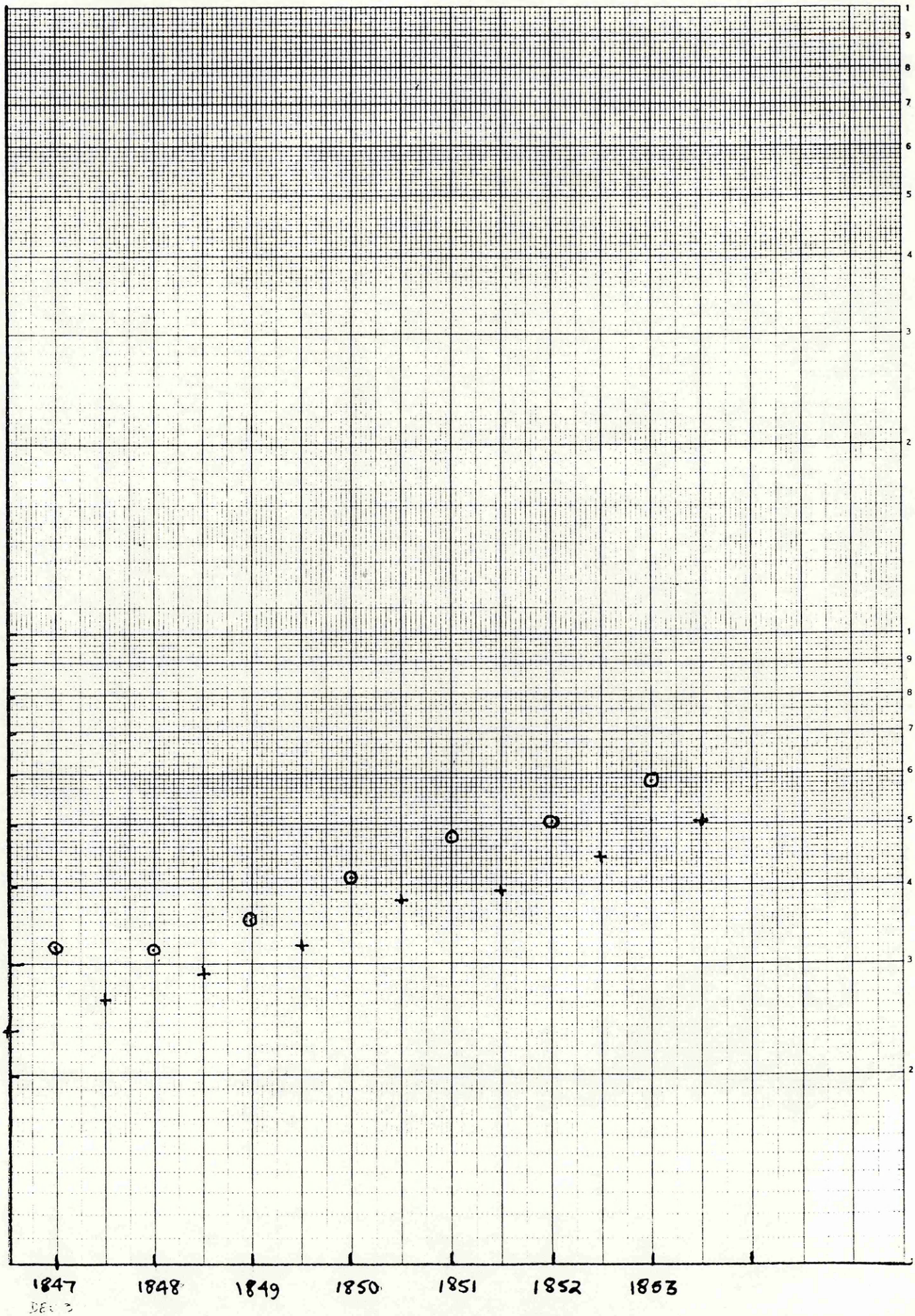


FIGURE 5

was an increase in the mileage of track laid to cater for the anticipated Exhibition traffic would not be reasonable and an examination of the records of all the main-line railway companies revealed no evidence of any such planning. Figure 1. Page 96

An examination of the numbers of fares data, however, shows that the Great Exhibition did have a marked effect on the volume of passenger traffic, and this effect was sufficiently large for a statistical estimate of its size to be made. The data was analysed in six main stages. Firstly, an estimate of the reliability of the available data was made and, secondly, the simple relationships that might exist between the variables "numbers of fares" and "time" were examined by the use of graphs. Thirdly, the method of least squares was used to fit linear equations to a selected set of data. Fourthly, the size of the effect that the Great Exhibition had on the number of passenger fares in 1851 was estimated. Fifthly, the degree of uncertainty in this estimated value was measured and lastly, an attempt was made to interpret these estimates.

The two sources of data, the accident statistics collected by the Board of Trade and the returns made by the Railway Commissioners, allowed a few comparisons to be made to check the reliability of the total numbers of fares quoted in the sources. The actual figures were supplied by the various individual railway companies as part of the process of paying passenger duty. Discrepancies are apparent (see Table 2, column 5). In June, 1848 and June, 1849 differences between the totals from the two sources are of the order of 100,000. These differences appear to arise from the failure of individual companies to provide passenger totals in time

for the six-monthly accident reports. The reports by the Commissioners, particularly those first compiled after the foundation of the Commission in 1846, since they range back to survey the earlier years of the decade, would have had time to incorporate the delayed figures and are probably more reliable. From 1850 onwards both sources give exactly the same totals. The worst discrepancy is 0.24% for the period ending on 31st December, 1849, which would have had a negligible effect on the later calculations and has been ignored. The numbers in the two sources are not always comparable. Figures are quoted for both six and twelve-monthly periods, but where necessary figures for some six-monthly periods can be estimated by cross-reference between the two sources (see column 4 of Table 2 and notes 4 & 5). Table 2. Figure 2.

The graph in Figure 2 shows the twelve-monthly data plotted for the period June, 1843 to June, 1854. There is an apparent misalignment of the point at December, 1851, illustrating the unusual increase in the number of fares during that year. Another obvious feature can be distinguished. Between June, 1845 and June, 1846 passenger traffic increased by 30%. Within this figure it is found that first-class traffic grew by only 13%, second-class by 18% and the third-class, when combined with the new parliamentary class, grew by no less than 41% This substantial increase stemmed from the 1844 Railway Act and the obligation laid on the railway companies to provide cheap trains for the benefit of the working classes. Once this type of traffic had been catered for and absorbed, the rate of growth became more modest and

reflected the economic depression of 1847 and 1848. (Figure 3)

The graph in Figure 3 shows the same twelve-monthly data as in Figure 2, but plotted on semi-logarithmic graph paper. This shows that approximate straight line relationships do exist over limited time periods. Lines were fitted by eye at this stage. A straight line relationship on this graph paper indicates a constant percentage pattern of growth from one year to the next. The points plotted are seen to lie approximately on two straight lines, showing different percentage growth rates before and after 1848. In the earlier years the railway network was still growing and the 1844 legislation stimulated traffic and created the new class of parliamentary passenger. As the decade progressed and the effects of this external stimulus wore off, a slower, more stable, rate of growth developed.

Because of the abrupt change in 1848, a straight line to fit the data and to illustrate especially the 1851 traffic, was restricted to the period after 1848. The effect of the period of the Great Exhibition is immediately apparent. Figure 4. Figure 5.

Figures 4 and 5 portray the six-monthly fares data plotted against arithmetic and logarithmic scales respectively. The June data on Figure 4 appear to lie on a smooth curve with the point for June, 1847 which represents last point of the high growth rate before the collapse of the Railway Mania and the economic depression which followed. The data for December produces a more irregular series on this diagram. This may well reflect the growing importance of excursion traffic. Much of this occurred in the summer

and autumn months and this class of traffic would have been the most responsive to the ups and downs of the national economy.

Because of the change of slope on Figure 3 and the corresponding high point of December, 1847 in Figure 5, it was thought reasonable to fit straight lines to the series only for the restricted periods June, 1848 to June, 1854 and December, 1848 to December, 1853. Even within this restricted period some slight curvature can be detected in the graphs on Figure 5, but it was felt to be insufficient to warrant fitting any curves more complex than straight lines. This was done as follows.

Let the time measured in units of one year, with t=1 corresponding to June, 1848 for the June series. t values would be

Date	June 1848	June 1849	June 1850	June 1851	June 1852	June 1853	June 1854
t	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Let N_t represent the number of fares accumulated over the previous six month period, e.g. N_2 in the June series represents the number of fares collected in the six months prior to June, 1849.

A straight line graph on semi-logarithmic graph paper implies an exponential relationship between N_t and t, of the form

$$N_t = a \exp(bt)$$

where a and b are constants. Transformed into numbers of passenger fares, this is (47,509,392 - 44,978,400) or 2,530,992.

The sum (1,951,003 + 2,530,992) which equals 4,482,000, correct to four significant figures, is the estimate of the total extraordinary number of fares experienced in 1851. The degree of uncertainty in this figure of about four and a half million must now be investigated to assess how meaningful it is.

Let N_t1 represent the number of fares recorded at time t. N_t is the corresponding number obtained from the line of best fit according to the theory of a constant proportional growth rate. The difference $(N_t1 - N_t)$ represents the residual between observed and theoretical values and is denoted here by d_t. Some residual values may be explained in terms of coincident historical events, while for others there may be no such obvious explanation. We cannot ignore the fact that effects other than the Great Exhibition, but operating concurrently with it, may affect the estimate made above of the apparent attractive effect of the Exhibition. The mean value of the modules of unexplained residuals i.e. $\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} |d_t|$ for n such residuals, has been chosen to represent the uncertainty with each of the June and December estimates. Other statistical measures of error have been rejected as inappropriate since the residuals here are not random sampling errors. A highly subjective measure of uncertainty has therefore been used as the most realistic guide to the error in the estimate of 4,482,000.

For the June and December series the residuals are as follows:

Year	d_t	
	June	December
1848	+423,092	- 18,559
1849	-129,605	-579,131
1850	-337,697	+1,126,719½
1851	-819,795	-739,476
1852	+395,616	+224,444
1853	+535,704	

Some residuals have been subjectively eliminated from the error estimates since reasonable explanations exist for them. For example, both of the 1852 residuals have been left out on the grounds that many of the artisans who made up much of the Exhibition traffic would not have been able to afford further outings in 1852 after having met the expense of visiting the Exhibition, and it is for that reason that the rate of growth was lower than might have been expected and shows up as a large negative value of d_t . Also, the residual figure for December, 1850 of +1,126,719½ may be explained by the vast upsurge in excursion traffic which took place that year. The scale of this was enough to attract the interest of the press. (2) This residual can thus be explained and has been left out of the measure of uncertainty.

The mean of the moduli of the remaining five residuals for June is 364,343, and of the three unexplained residuals for December is 274,045. The final estimate of the extra fares generated by the attraction of the Exhibition is therefore 4,482,000 + or - 638,388, or rounded, 4,480,000 + or

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(2) Illustrated London News, 21st September, 1851

- 640,000, i.e. a number in the range 3,840,000 to 5,120,000. Since the total number of fares for the year was just over 85 million, some five per cent of that total may be ascribed to the effect of the Exhibition.

A number of points must, however, be borne in mind when any attempt is made to interpret this estimate of the number of railway fares generated by the Exhibition. All the figures quoted are for the United Kingdom and include both Scotland and Ireland. If Scotland were excluded, the calculations would have produced a higher figure for the fares generated. In the late 1840's the mileage of track opened in Scotland was increasing at much the same rate as in England and the passenger traffic was increasing fairly regularly by some 30% per annum. But in 1851 the total number of passengers increased from 8,844,191 in 1850 to 9,286,313, an increase of only 4.9% (3) Since this sudden lack of growth in Scotland was not reflected in the totals for the United Kingdom as a whole in 1851, most of the growth which produced the 'Exhibition effect' must have come in England and Wales. Ireland was still suffering from the effects of the Famine and the subsequent huge loss of population. The mileage of track opened increased by 12.5% but the number of passengers increased only from 5,495,796 to 5,633,603, an increase of only 2.5% (3) It is thus unlikely that visitors from Scotland or Ireland made any major impact on the totals of those who visited the Exhibition. (4)

One important factor which must be considered but which cannot be quantified is the extent by which traffic in other

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(3) Parliamentary Papers, Report of the Railway Commissioners, 1852, XLVIII, p. 18

(4) See below, chapter 12: The Results of the Exhibition.

parts of the country was reduced because people were using their money to visit London and the Exhibition rather than other places. John Ellis, chairman of the Midland Railway, certainly did complain of this. He claimed that weekly receipts from the Birmingham to Gloucester traffic had fallen by as much as £550 in August 1851 by comparison with the same month of the previous year, and that lines which depended on holiday traffic like Matlock, Cheltenham and Scarborough were badly affected by the diversion of passengers to the Exhibition. (5) One of the railway newspapers also commented on this trend at some length in an editorial. (6) This may well mean that the calculated figure of 4,482,000 is too low, since the Exhibition traffic had to be large enough not only to make its own impact on the total of recorded fares, but also to offset this loss of traffic in other areas.

On the other hand the method by which the fares totals were originally collected will have given an artificially high impression of the number of people who actually did travel to London. The figures supplied by the individual companies were simply added together. But, a passenger who began his journey with one company might be transferred to another company before he actually reached London. The same passenger on a single journey might thus show up as several passengers in the national total. The receipts of the Railway Clearing House, which show the extent of the traffic

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(5) Williams, op. cit., p. 98; Barnes, op. cit., p. 135
Many of the railway company chairmen also drew attention to this problem in their half-yearly reports. Every issue of The Railway Times between 24th January, 1852 and 13th March, 1852 contains rush reports covering railway companies from Central Scotland to the West Country.

(6) Herepath's Journal, 25th October, 1851

between companies, are too incomplete for this period to be of any value. (7) Dr. Lardner, the writer and statistician, did some calculations on this problem just before the Exhibition. His figures seem to indicate that this was not a major factor, since most journeys at this time were over relatively short distances. (8) But the Exhibition traffic did not reflect the normal situation in that more people were travelling specifically to London rather than just within their own areas. It must, however, be remembered that the largest railway companies, serving the main urban areas of England, with the single exception of the Midland Railway, did have direct access to London and no transfers would have been involved on those lines. It may well be that this is not a major problem since the bulk of of the passengers must have come from the towns and cities served by the main companies. It is, however, unlikely that any numerical value can be placed upon it.

These factors must to some extent cancel each other out. Reduced traffic in some areas away from London would indicate that the calculated figure is too low, but the practice of re-counting every passenger who crossed railway network would indicate that it is too high. It is therefore possible that none of these factors, when they are all considered together, would significantly distort the calculated effect of the Exhibition.

One other problem must be mentioned. The figures in the Parliamentary Papers do not make any distinction between

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(7) P. Bagwell, The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy, 1842-1922, London, 1968, appendix 2.

(8) Lardner, op. cit., pp. 168-171

single and return fares. If one return fare, and surely almost every excursionist would have taken a return fare, counts as one passenger both going to and coming from London, this would give a figure of more than four million people travelling to the Exhibition. If, however, each single journey was recorded as one fare, then the total of 4,482,000 would have to be halved. But, since excursion fares were for return journeys, and since they were considerably lower than the normal fares, few passengers would have had any reason to buy single tickets. Even those who travelled in the first weeks of the Exhibition period, before excursion and reduced fares were widely available, would have been more likely to have bough return tickets. Advertisements for the railway excursions certainly do quote the cost of return fares, and since the figures quoted are for fares rather than single journeys, it does seem possible that the higher figure does give a good indication of the number of people who did travel during the Exhibition period.

One final complication must be added to cast further doubt upon the figure of four million travelling to London to visit the Exhibition. The mainline railway companies did claim to be pleased by the volume of extra traffic and profit generated by the Exhibition in their half-yearly financial reports, but several drew attention to the way in which ordinary travellers had taken advantage of the cheap exursion trains to go about their normal business. John Ellis, M.P., Chairman of the Midland Railway complained that,

> "People of all grades and classes availed themselves most systematically of their cheap trains, and by hook and crook showed a determination

to travel from station to station by means of them." (9)

Perhaps all that can be said with some assurance is that the period during which the Exhibition was open saw an increase in passenger traffic of some four million people, of whom a considerable proportion must have travelled to London to visit the Exhibition. The Exhibition could not have succeeded without them, and the railway system which transported them.

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(9) John Ellis, M.P., quoted in The Railway Times, 28th February, 1852. See also The Times of 21st February, 1852 for a similar complaint from the Chairman of the Eastern Counties Railway and The Times of 28th February, 1852 for an even stronger complaint from E.B. Dennison of the Great Northern Railway.

Chapter 7.

Travelling Conditions on the Railways.

The massive excursion traffic generated by the Exhibition imposed a considerable strain upon the railway companies, and indeed upon the passengers. Excursion trains were well below the regular services in the list of priorities; in this the views of the companies, the Board of Trade and, of course, many of the non-excursion passengers coincided. Excursion trains were often subject to considerable delay to ensure that the timetables of the regular trains, particularly the express services, were not disrupted. Yet, despite their efforts, the companies were not always successful. Horace Greeley, an American journalist who spent most of 1851 in Britain, made a number of visits to provincial cities during the summer. He claimed that the whole system was muddled with excursion trains and even the expresses were slow, unpunctual and expensive. On one train of 24 wagons he found that half were for regular passengers and half were occupied by returning excursion passengers. (1) John Tod, an Edinburgh engineer who visited London with his family and compiled a lengthy diary of his experiences, had a more acceptable change when returning from Euston to Edinburgh. He was forced to vacate his second-class carriage and to move into the first-class for most of his journey. (2)

As far as possible, of course, most of the delays and inconvenience were borne by the excursion passengers. Third-class and excursion traffic had grown enormously in the 1840's, but these categories of passenger still received very poor

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(1) H. Greeley, Glances at Europe, New York, 1851, pp. 293-4

(2) Scottish Record Office, reference GD1/440/10/2, Diary of John Tod, p. 126

treatment from the companies.

Samuel Sidney, author and journalist, was something of a public relations man, for he wrote about railways with particular and favourable emphasis on the London & North Western. In his book, Rides on Railways, he described the passengers on the Parliamentary trains as a mixture of commercial travellers, curates, tinkers, recently released convicts, prize-fighters, half-pay officers, Irishmen bound for America, shopkeepers, soldiers and sailors.... a very romantic mixture. He gave an account of one journey:

> "Having on one occasion gone down by first class with an Oxford man who had just taken his M.A., an ensign of infantry in his first uniform, a clerk in Somerset House, and a Manchester man who had been visiting a Whig lord, and returned third-class, with a tinker, a sailor just home from Africa, a bird-catcher with his load, and a gentleman in velveteens, rather greasy, who seemed, probably on a private mission to have visited the misdemeanour wards of all the prisons in England and Scotland; we preferred the return trip, that is to say vulgar and amusing, to dull and genteel." (3)

Other contemporary authors certainly gave a harsher version. Henry Scrivenor, in his comprehensive financial study of the railway companies, did not feel it out of place to complain about the conditions under which third-class passengers were expected to travel. (4) On the Parliamentary trains, which had been forced upon the companies by the 1844 Act, passengers

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(3) Sidney, op. cit., p. 11

(4) Scrivenor, op. cit., p. 13

were conveyed in what he described as "prison-vans," but on any additional trains the companies might provide, for excursions for example, they were quite free to use open wagons in which the passengers were exposed to the weather and the smoke and sparks of the engine. These were known as tubs and they "had no top and no seats so that there was no protection from the wind or rain. I have seen as many as 80 passengers when first the railway was made as standing in one of these tubs like so many cattle with their backs up and benumbed with cold." (5) Another, but this time anonymous author, developed this theme at greater length in 1862, indicating that there had been little improvement over the years. In The Railway Traveller's Handy Book, he wrote that, "the discomforts and inconvenience of the third class are too notorious to need much dwelling upon." (6) But he himself could not resist the temptation, for with a curious lack of logic, he was worried that any reader able to buy his little book might still be tempted to save money by travelling third-class. Any reader so tempted was warned to think again, for he would have to endure severe overcrowding and be "doomed to semi-suffocation, to partial extinction of vision, and total deprivation of motive power." (7) Part of the problem stemmed from luggage, which seemed to be carried in vast quantities, and from which no passenger was prepared to be parted. If the reader insisted on ignoring these warnings, he was advised to sit away from the doors to avoid the draughts.

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(5) ibid., p. 13

(6) Anon., The Railway Traveller's Handy Book, 1862, reprinted London, 1971, p. 49

(7) ibid., p. 49

One might think that the fresh air would have been welcome, but apparently not. There was also the problem that inexperienced fellow passengers would become so excited that they would insist on climbing past to look out the window, "beating time on your shins with his hob-nailed and iron-shod high-lows." (8) The author was at pains to point out, "that these little rubs, which are patiently borne by the humbler and more enduring portion of the community, may prove a source of great disquiet and pain to him who is unaccustomed to be thus tried." (9)

The journalist George Sala gave a similar picture of the third-class passengers gathering for a train leaving Euston in a book published in 1859. He described them as

> "for the most part, hard-handed, poorly-clad creatures; men in patched, time-worn garments; women in pinched bonnets and coarse shawls, carrying a plenitude of baskets and bundles, but very slightly troubled with trunks or portmanteaus." (10)

Sala described very vividly the noise and bustle of the crowd with a good eye for detail. His sympathies were engaged by the children he saw:

> "poor little wan faces you see here, overshadowed by mis-shaped caps and bonnets nine bauble square; poor little thin hands, feebly clutching the scant gowns of their mothers; weazened little bodies, shrunken little limbs, distorted often by early

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(8) ibid., p. 52

(9) ibid., p. 49

(10) G. A. Sala, Twice Round the Clock, London, 1859, p. 61

hardship, by the penury which pounced on them." (11) The passengers described are a mixture of sailors, railway navvies, serving maids, Jewish pedlars, Irish labourers, soldiers on leave, journeymen mechanics, charwomen, stablemen, servants, bricklayers and shop assistants, but they have noneof the glamour that Sidney gave to a similar crowd. The only cheerful faces described by Sala were those of Irish paupers being sent back to their native parish. (12)

Sala's description has the ring of truth lacking in that of Sidney. But even Sidney's account must have caused some annoyance to the railway companies. One reason why third-class accommodation was so bad and so deliberately overcrowded was to prevent potential first and second-class passengers saving money by travelling on it. It was even claimed that, "the management of the Manchester & Leeds Railway adopted what was known as the 'soot-bag' system. Sweeps were hired to enter a third-class carriage which had been specially kept for the benefit of 'persons in a superior position,' and then shake out the contents of their bags." (13) The attitude that lay behind this story, if not the story itself, is confirmed by Whishaw's comment on the London & Blackwell Railway, "We were astonished to see several most respectably dressed persons riding in the Stanhope compartments, which are intended especially for those who cannot afford to pay for better accommodation." (14) Sala even argued that the

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(11) ibid., p. 61

(12) ibid., p. 61

(13) W. M. Acworth, The Railways of England, London, 1889, p. 42

(14) Whishaw, op. cit., p. 267

same theory was applied to second-class passengers in the hope of making them travel first-class. (15)

It is perhaps worth noting that the descriptions of Sala and Sidney, although they differ greatly, do share one common feature. They describe people of many different occupations who, despite their apparent poverty, could afford to travel by rail.

The carriage design of the period made few concessions to comfort outside the first-class. Before the 1844 Act third-class passengers, if they were carried at all, were carried in open wagons completely exposed to the elements. But the 1844 Act insisted that all passengers on the Parliamentary trains must be carried in covered carriages. The 'Stanhope' referred to above was an open box on wheels with holes in the floor to let the rainwater drain away. These had to be replaced on the Parliamentary trains although, as we have seen, they could still be used on services beyond the statutory minimum and on excursion services. The Great Western Railway responded to the 1844 Act by building enclosed boxes, with one door on each side. There were no lights and no windows, just small slats for ventilation. Each carriage had bench seating for 60. (16) The problems, particularly in the event of an accident, are obvious. But these were a temporary expedient to meet the requirements of the Act and they were quickly replaced with six-wheeled iron-plated carriages divided into seven compartments. (17) Each compartment had its own door with four small windows. Each had

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(15) Sala, op. cit., p. 62

(16) O. S. Nock, The Great Western Railway, London, 1962, p. 152

(17) ibid., p. 152

seating for eight passengers, a total of 56 per carriage. In carriages of the same length, the second class class held 40 and the first class held 32. This stock was typical of most of the English railway companies. A Manchester businessman, Louis M. Hayes, remembered his own visit to the Great Exhibition at the age of 15. He wrote that "the thirds were about as uninviting as they could well be. In these there was a general feeling of bare boards and cheerlessness as you entered them." (18) He seems to have remembered especially the tiny windows, "giving the most limited view possible of the outside world." (19)

The Great Northern Railway was exceptional. As the 'youngest' of the major companies, it had to establish its new routes from London to Yorkshire against the existing routes of the Midland and the London & North Western by providing faster and more comfortable services. Its rolling stock was newer than that of its rivals and, having come into being after the 1844 Act, it had never built up a major stock of open wagons for the third-class service. As a result, the third-class carriages were equal to the second-class on most other lines and the second-class had the luxury of adequate windows and cushioned seats. (20) These factors were to give the company a considerable advantage over its rivals in the bitter struggle for the 1851 excursion traffic from Yorkshire. But the standards of the Great Northern should not be overstated. In May, 1850, the Locomotive Superintendant, Archibald Sturrock informed his committee

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(18) L. M. Hayes, Reminiscences of Manchester From the Year 1840, London, 1905, p. 170

(19) ibid., p. 170

(20) O. S. Nock, The Great Northern Railway, London, 1974, p. 39

that if a cattle wagon needed to be converted for passenger use, "the only alteration required to prepare it for such a duty would be the doors being made to open in the same manner as a common carriage door." (21)

The Scottish companies were marginally better than the English. The smaller population and the lower proportion of those who could afford the higher rates of fare meant that these companies had from their beginnings to make more of an effort to attract third-class passengers. On the Caledonian Railway the third-class carriages had four compartments each seating eight passengers, "the windows were quite large by contemporary standards, but none of them opened, and ventilation was by means of three narrow slits above the doors." (22) This does sound rather better than the Great Western boxes, until one realises that the total length of the carriage was a mere 18 feet and the inside height of a compartment was 5.5 feet. What happened if there were standing passengers hardly bears thinking about.

But it is perhaps safe to assume that the author of the Railway Traveller's Handy Book was right when he wrote of the patient endurance of the humbler classes, although there were times when that endurance seems to have worn very thin. The Exhibition year produced a flood of comic stories and novels of the trials of provincial visitors on their excursions to London. Tom Treddlehoyle's Trip ta Lunnan describes one such visit in broad Yorkshire dialect. When Tom arrives in London, "an befoar't train had weel stop't, aght all gat, sum neck and crop, an uthers topplin wan agean't tuther,

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(21) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Locomotive Committee, Rail 236, Piece 206, 18th May, 1850

(22) O. S. Nock, The Caledonian Railway, London, 1973, p. 32

breikin ther hats and noazes, an't wimmin squalin like jays e ivvery dereskshan, 'Thar't crushin me bunnit'; 'Oh! me toes'; at last we gat uptat toan gate." (23) There were a great many bumps and bruises amid the squealing and crushing, and the fiction was supported by fact. As Sir Francis Head commented, "Just as it is hard to make money, easy to spend it, so although it consumes at least twenty minutes to fill and despatch a long train, it scarcely requires as many seconds to empty one." (24) There were occasions when much more than twenty minutes were required. On Sunday 7th September some 3,000 people arrived at Southampton station for an excursion leaving at 6.30.p.m. Unfortunately, there were delays, which allowed tempers to build up, and by the time the carriages arrived at 7.00.p.m. a riot had broken out. Station windows had been broken, women had fainted, shoes had been lost, children had been crushed and several people suffered minor injuries. But many in the crowd were employees of Southampton tradesmen. They had been given the Monday off work and, in many cases, their employers were paying the cost of the outing so they were determined not to be cheated of their holiday. Order was gradually restored; but it was 9.30. p.m. before the train left. Most of the formalities had to be abandoned. Many people had pushed into first and second-class carriages with only third-class tickets and it was believed that many managed to travel without having paid any fare at all. (25)

Fortunately for the railway companies scenes as bad as

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(23) Anon., Tom Treddlehoyle's Trip ta Lunnan ta See Paxton's Great Glass Lantern, Leeds, 1851, p. 13

(24) Sir Francis Head, Stokers and Pokers, London, 1849, p. 46

(25) News of the World, 14th September, 1851

this were exceptional, but heavy crowding was a regular feature of the excursion trains. On joining one of these at Manchester, Louis Hayes remembered being "jostled and knocked about in all directions. Eventually our party fought their way into a carriage, and although it was already full to overflowing I was dragged in through the window, and the occupants tried to make the best of things under the circumstances." (26) Hayes was one of a family of 15 children, but he does not record how many of them went to London. Travelling in such conditions must have required great powers of endurance, particularly on the night trains which were a common feature of the Exhibition traffic. Several companies, the Midland for example, introduced night excursions, in which the passengers travelled overnight arriving in London in the early morning. After spending the day in the Crystal Palace, they travelled back the next night and were at work the next day so as to lose only one day's work. This notable feat of endurance roused great interest in the press and gave rise to many 'human interest' stories. Leeds, in particular, produced many individuals whose exploits aroused much amusement. Perhaps the most admirable was the worker who got drunk one evening, borrowed 5s. from his good-natured landlady and work up next morning to find himself in London with only 4½d. He 'borrowed' 1s. from a foreigner who was amused by his story and this paid for his admission to the Exhibition, where he was lucky enough to find an acquaintance from Leeds, who bought him something to eat. His 4½d. went on stout to prepare him for the return journey. (27) In view of the condition of the trains, his approach was perhaps not unwise.

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(26) Hayes, op. cit., p. 214

(27) The Leeds Times, 2nd August, 1851

For the majority of passengers these night journeys required a patient willingness to endure considerable discomfort. Third-class carriages had only wooden benches and little ventilation. The summer months were very warm and dry and at times the heat was oppressive. On his journey south John Tod noticed that the rivers were full of cattle seeking relief from the heat. (28) On the trains the only light came from that provided by the passengers themselves, a practice hardly conducive to safety. One anonymous letter writer sent to the Leeds Times a harrowing account of such a journey. He had travelled on a third-class excursion, his train had been badly overcrowded and subjected to considerable delay. The only light came from lanterns and candles carried by some of his fellow passengers. (29) Yet, despite these discomforts, night excursions were to be one of the more enduring results of the Exhibition. Influenced no doubt by his experience of working with the Midland Railway, Thomas Cook began regular trips like this from the Midlands to Scarborough and the other seaside towns in 1856. (30)

Delays were a serious problem on these short excursions, not simply because they disrupted the traffic, but also because the waste of time could be ill-afforded by the passengers. Horace Greeley was not an excursion passenger, but his complaints about the delays have already been noted, (31) and John Tod, although he was impressed by the speed of the train on the Caledonian Railway, was annoyed by the hours of delay

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(28) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., p. 10

(29) The Leeds Times, 9th August, 1851

(30) Pudney, op. cit., p. 117

(31) Greeley, op. cit., p. 294

at Carstairs, Carlisle and Tamworth. (32) Louis Hayes had an even more frustrating experience:

> "We were shunted and sided, and sided and shunted, and kept ages waiting here, there and everywhere, until the whole charm of the journey had been completely knocked out of it. It would have been bad enough even in a moderately-filled train, but with carriages nearly bursting with their living contents the long drawn out 'pleasures' of this particular journey to London may to some extent be imagined." (33)

The journey which, as an excursion, normally took about seven hours, on this occasion took more than 18 and ended late at night among the bustle and confusion of Euston. Another case came to light because it involved an accident. An excursion train organised by the Caledonian Railway left Euston for Aberdeen at 9.30. p.m. on 11th September, more than two hours late. After two breakdowns it was four hours late at Carlisle, where it ran into a goods train. Nineteen people were injured, but there were two doctors on the train who were able to assist. A new engine was procured and the journey was resumed, but the engine was not powerful enough and had to be replaced. The train then smashed its way through the gates at Dubton Junction. Although no one was injured, yet another engine had to be found before the train could proceed. It eventually reached Aberdeen some 12 hours late. (34) This chapter of accidents was unusual, but the

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(32) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., pp. 8-10

(33) Hayes, op. cit., p. 215

(34) The Aberdeen Herald, 12th September, 1851

delays and breakdowns would have been familiar to many excursionists. A common joke of the period told of the passenger who, when asked to show his ticket, produced a child's ticket. When the collector objected, he was told that the train was so slow that the passenger had grown up on it. (35)

Since these trains had no corridors or lavatory facilities, the delays must have caused considerable discomfort. Passengers were expected to use the lavatories in stations and trains had to stop more frequently for that very reason. But these stops could in themselves cause problems. Railway staff did not always inform the passengers how long the train would stop (36) and inexperienced travellers were liable to be left behind. Great amusement was caused by the story of the barber from Holbeck who went to London alone because he could not afford to take his wife and son. He was so impressed by what he saw that he saved and sent them on a visit. But the wife was deaf and the son was "daft," and during one of the stops on their return the son wandered off into the countryside and the wife boarded the wrong train and ended up in York instead of Leeds. (37)

The cynic might wonder if these delays were designed to benefit the railway refreshment rooms, for not everyone shared Sir Francis Head's admiration. His description of Wolverton is too well-known to need repetition. (38) No doubt many excursionists were forced to spend money on refreshments for

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(35) Hayes, op. cit., p. 172

(36) Greeley, op. cit., p. 294

(37) The Leeds Times, 30th August, 1851

(38) Head, op. cit., p. 85

which they had not budgeted. Others seem to have come well prepared, carrying their own supplies. The Morning Chronicle noted that many of the visitors to the Crystal Palace carried small bottles, "which not infrequently contain forbidden liquors of one kind or another, and having disposed of the contents, they replenish their bottles with the water from the crystal fountain." (39) The water was then carried home as a memorial of the visit. On the opening day, 1st May, the streets of London must have resembled an enormous outdoor café. About half a million people assembled round Hyde Park (40) and to be sure of a good view, many had camped out all night. The taverns usually opened at 7.00. a.m. (41) but on this occasion many probably opened early to take advantage of the unusual crowds. Most people, however, seemed to prefer their own arrangements. The artist Edward Ward walked through the crowds with his wife in the early hours, and Mrs. Ward left a vivid description of the scene as breakfasts were prepared:

> "Cold sausage and bacon were being dealt out by heads of families, children were being regaled with milk from enormous bottles, and I saw an old Irishwoman smoking a pipe contentedly." (42)

Around Berkley Square "people of good standing" had slept in their carriages and about 6.30. a.m.,

> "servants, wearing powdered wigs, were preparing

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(39) The Morning Chronicle, 11th September, 1851

(40) C. Hobhouse, 1851 and the Crystal Palace, London, 1937, p. 63

(41) Sala, op. cit., p. 54

(42) H. M. A. Ward, Memories of Ninety Years, London, 1924, p. 62

breakfast on the pavement, kettles were singing, and the smell of bacon and eggs frying greeted us, whilst fine ladies, in lovely attire and poke bonnets, declared they were fainting for a cup of tea. Footmen, distracted by these appeals, and the novel manner of serving breakfast, were tumbling over each other." (43)

Many of those who came to London by train must have made similar, if less lavish arrangements.

Considerable numbers of the passengers, especially the more inexperienced, were probably more worried about their safety than the delays or refreshments. The electric telegraph was not yet in widespread use, and safety depended on steady running by drivers who also had to keep a good look-out, but the slow speeds, especially ofexcursion trains, meant that there were few serious accidents. One of them occurred on the Great Northern Railway at Horsey Station. An excursion train taking passengers back from London to Hull, Grimsby and Boston was delayed by a broken-down coal train and then hit in the rear by another excursion train bound for York and Leeds. Both trains were crowded with hundreds of people and the train for Leeds was being driven "at a rapid rate" by two engines. (44) Remarkably, no one was killed, but many were injured. The other severe accident involving the Exhibition traffic was on 6th September. A London & North Western train from London to Oxford with some 200 passengers crashed at Bicester Station. There had been

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(43) ibid., p. 62

(44) The Annual Register, 1851

a confusion of instructions. The driver had been told not to stop there, the station-master thought he was supposed to and points were wrongly changed while the train was moving. The station was turned into a temporary hospital by two doctors who had been on the train and who were aided by other doctors brought from Oxford. But six people died and ten were seriously injured. The accident cost the Company nearly £30,000 in compensation. (45)

Dr. Lardner, writing on the subject of accidents in Railway Economy, drew up a list of rules for passengers who were anxious to minimise their chances of ebing involved in accidents or mishaps. Rule VIII laid down that, "special trains, excursion trains, and all other exceptional trains are to be avoided, being more unsafe than the ordinary and regular trains." (46) His argument was based on the fact that engine drivers were aware of the position and times of regular trains. Special trains, and to a lesser extent, excursion trains were unexpected and thus in more danger. Lardner gave specific examples to justify his rules and, had the book been published a few months later, he could have drawn on the Exhibition excursions for examples to support his case. Fortunately for the railway companies the public did not heed his warning about excursion trains.

Yet the accidents and the delays should not be overstressed. The huge volume of Exhibition traffic threw an enormous burden on the railway companies and their staff, who had to run and service all the extra traffic. Ordinary

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(45) ibid., 1851

(46) Lardner, op. cit., p. 341

members of the public were aware mainly of the flaws and the problems, (47) but this overlooks the very real achievement of moving so many hundreds of thousands of extra passengers in safety, if not in comfort. There was no dramatic increase in the accident rate despite the increased number of passengers, as can be seen from the accident figures below.

Numbers killed or injured from all causes on all railways in the United Kingdom, 1848-1852.

Half-year ending:	Killed:	Injured:	Total No. of Passengers
30 June, 1848	90	99	26,330,492
31 December, 1848	112	120	31,524,641
30 June, 1849	96	75	28,761,895
31 December, 1849	106	112	34,924,469
30 June, 1850	93	68	31,766,503
31 December, 1850	123	188	41,087,919
30 June, 1851	105	173	37,881,703
31 December, 1851	113	264	47,509,392
30 June, 1852	83	99	39,249,605
31 December, 1852	133	387	49,886,124

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(47) For example, there were so many complaints about delays in the mails in Aberdeen that the Council felt it necessary to complain to the Aberdeen Railway Company. Mr. F. Tilley, the assistant-secretary, apologised but blamed "the increase of passenger traffic on the various Railways during the past season, which has rendered it quite impractical to work the trains with regularity." The North of Scotland Gazette, 10th October, 1851.

(48) Parliamentary Papers: 1849, volume XXVII; 1850, volume XXXI; 1851, volume XXX; 1851, volume LI; 1852/3, volume

The directors and managers of the railway companies were not noted for their excessive generosity towards their staff, but after the Exhibition has closed, many of them showed their understanding of what their staffs had achieved by paying cash bonuses. These had certainly been well earned. Many passengers did complain, with good reason, about the treatment they received, but it seems likely that many more would have agreed with the future electrical engineer, R. E. Crompton. He was only six years old when he went to the Exhibition, but remembered it as "the first real event of my life" and he could only marvel at the enormous train drawn by six locomotives which took him safely from Thirsk to London. (49)

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(49) R. E. Crompton, Reminiscences, London, 1928, p. 4

but Cremorne Gardens, the Diorama at Leicester Square and many of the other sights. The cost "considerably exceeding the fund which his workpeople had saved," Milligan was obliged to draw on his own resources. This generosity was described as "among the many illustrations of the auspicious influence of the Great Exhibition in promoting relations of kindness and goodwill between different classes." (11) The workers were described as being delighted with their holiday, but for Milligan the real reward came from the Leeds Intelligencer's comment that the workers were "still more delighted with their employer." (12)

Other examples of generosity can be found in a wide variety of working situations. At the Dowlais Iron Works in South Wales an association was set up with the help of the owner's wife Lady Charlotte Guest. Each member had to pay £1-10s. and Lady Guest was to pay anything over this. (13) In July some 200 workers went to London. In addition to visiting the Exhibition, they went to the British Museum with Henry Layard as their guide and were then entertained to dinner. (14) Sir John Guest was known as a strict employer, but he had also founded schools and churches for his workers and their families. From his factories in Bath and Bristol, Sir John Eyre also sent a large party, which included families as well as workers. Six of the children were lost in the Crystal Palace, but this had been provided for. All of them had been given labels and were easily found.

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(11) The Leeds Intelligencer, 12th July, 1851

(12) ibid., 12th July, 1851

(13) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 26th February, 1851

(14) Earl of Bessborough, Journal of Lady Charlotte Guest, London, 1949, p. 276

(15) Sidney Herbert, the prominent Peelite, sent all the labourers from his estate at Wilton and he also paid for all the children from the four schools in Wilton. (16)

Many such examples can be found in the pages of both local and national newspapers and it is clear that motives other than a tradition of aristocratic charity were involved. Far too many industrial firms, banks, insurance companies, textile mills and railway companies made special arrangements for their workers for generosity to be the only motive. Several reasons can be distinguished. They were not mutually exclusive and most employers probably had more than one in mind.

Certain people felt an obligation to set an example. The Queen had a vested interest in ensuring the success of the Exhibition and it is hardly surprising that she paid for a visit by 150 labourers from Osborne. They went with their families by steamer to Southampton and then by special train to London in early July. (17) She also arranged a visit for the crew of her yacht Victoria. (18) Prince Albert not surprisingly was also quick to set his own example. He was Colonel of the Scots Fusilier Guards and he paid for the admission of all 1,200 officers and men of the regiment. They attended in three batches in the middle of June. (19) The Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Wellington, had already ordered that leave should be given to all officers (but not

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(15) The Western Times, 5th July, 1851

(16) The Ayr Observer, 16th September, 1851

(17) The Stonehaven Journal, 15th July, 1851.

(18) ibid., 1st July, 1851

(19) The Brechin Advertiser, 24th June, 1851

other ranks) stationed in Britain to allow them to attend. Officers were quick to take advantage of this concession, but those who applied to the railway companies for permission to travel at service rates were brusquely informed by at least one major company that they were welcome to take advantage of the ordinary excursions. (20) Other soldiers followed the example of the Prince and went further than the Duke. The men of the Coldstream Guards were similarly sent in batches at the expense of their Colonel. (21) Lieutenant General Sir George Scovell, Colonel of the 4th Light Dragoons stationed at Hampton Court and Hounslow, did even more. He not only sent all the men of the regiment, but also paid for the wives and children as well. (22) Some of the men arrived drunk at Waterloo Road station on their way back and became involved in a scuffle with other passengers. When the police intervened two of the soldiers were injured and arrested. (23)

Other official and semi-official organisations followed these examples and the publicity they received must in turn have influenced others. The Excise Department granted leave to certain grades of customs officers in London. Officers in other ports were given longer periods depending on their distance from London. (24) This led to complaints from Post

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(20) British Transport Archives, London & North Western Railway, General Road & Traffic Committee, LNWR 1, Piece 140, 13th June, 1851

(21) The Stonehaven Journal, 15th July, 1851

(22) The Times, 20th August, 1851

(23) The Stonehaven Journal, 26th August, 1851

(24) Illustrated London News, 13th September, 1851

Office clerks who felt that they should have received similar concessions. (25) The Corporation of the City of London had strongly supported the Exhibition and this was another institution which gave leave to its employees. All the clerks and other staff at the Mansion House and Guildhall were given not only leave of absence but one guinea each to pay their expenses. (26)

One official group anxious not to be left out was the police. Some officers from the forces outside London were sent to the Exhibition to deal with the expected influx of criminals; but when this crime wave failed to materialise, most of them were returned to their normal duties. (27) Many of their colleagues in the provinces also wished to visit the Exhibition. The police in Leicester were given a week's leave in batches of ten and the Mayor opened a subscription fund to pay their expenses. (28) This might be interpreted as an employer trying to improve relations with his employees, as was being done on a wide scale in industry and commerce, or it might have been a civic leader trying to set an example. But, many policemen seemed to see their position rather differently. The constables of Cheltenham applied to the Great Western Railway for free passes to London on the grounds that, "they in the exercise of their duty afford great assistance to the Officers of the Company."

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(25) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 14th June, 1851.

(26) ibid., 14th June, 1851

(27) The Leeds Intelligencer, 28th June, 1851.

(28) ibid., 12th July, 1851.

(29) Their plea was in vain; the directors turned down the request on the grounds that "it must lead to numberless similar applications." (30) It is not clear from the Company's minutes, however, if the directors feared applications from other groups, or more applications from the police on other occasions; but they did offer to take the constables at the rates being offered to the excursion clubs. The Cambridge constables had more success with the directors of the Eastern Counties Railway. The Chairman of the Watch Committee applied on their behalf for free passes. The Traffic Committee agreed to this request in gratitude for "the valuable assistance the Company received from the Force in general during the Strike of the Engine Drivers." (31) That these requests were made at all, is an interesting revelation of how the police forces in their early years regarded themselves as sufficiently allied to business to request such favours and how business regarded the request of such favours as normal practice, unworthy of any special comment.

Generally speaking these visits by public servants were reported favourably by the newspapers, although there was an understandable desire to ensure that public money was not misused. When the Street Committee of the Aberdeen Council decided to send a police inspector to look out for any improvements in sewage, street-lighting and fire-fighting,

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(29) British Transport Archives, Great Western Railway Board Minutes, Rail 250, Piece 5, 15th July, 1851.

(30) ibid., 15th July, 1851

(31) ibid., Eastern Counties Railway Traffic Committee, Rail 186, Piece 41, 14th September, 1851

the local newspapers were sceptical. (32) In Leeds scepticism gave way to open anger when it was revealed that five members of the Board of Highway Surveyors, which had an interest in a bill going through Parliament, had used this as an excuse to visit the Exhibition at public expense. (33)

There were numerous individuals who used their influence in private industry to arrange visits and thus help to ensure the Exhibition's success. At Baring's Bank, one of the senior partners, Thomas Baring, was a Commissioner. Another senior partner, Joshua Bates, had subscribed £500 to the Exhibition and promised another £10,000 if required. Staff at the bank were provided with season tickets at his expense. This firm had a tradition of generous treatment of its staff. In 1842 it had begun to pay their income tax, a policy continued until 1939. (34) The building contractor and friend of Prince Albert, Thomas Cubitt, was another strong supporter of the Exhibition. (35) He sent all his workers to visit it in batches of 200. The men lost none of their wages, but they were expected to make up the lost time. (36) Cubitt was well regarded within the industry as a model employer. (37) William Clowes had a similar reputation; he was well known

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(32) The Aberdeen Herald, 13th September, 1851

(33) The Leeds Intelligencer, 28th June, 1851

(34) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 10th May, 1851; supplemented by information kindly supplied by Mr. T. L. Ingram, Archivist, Baring Brothers & Company Ltd., from the diary of Joshua Bates.

(35) H. Hobhouse, Thomas Cubitt: Master Builder, London, 1974, p. 443

(36) The Leeds Times, 7th June, 1851

(37) Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 295

for the "active interest he took in the welfare of the operatives of his craft." (38) He was the owner of the firm responsible for printing the Exhibition catalogue and he ensured that some 500 workers paid it a visit. (39) Philip Pusey was one of the best known landowners to support the Free Trade movement. He was greatly interested in the scientific and technical improvement of agriculture and this reputation led to his selection as a Commissioner. (40) Some 445 labourers were sent from his estates in Faringdon in Berkshire and they showed their gratitude by presenting him with a silver snuff box. (41) The staff of St. Paul's Cathedral, some 130 in all, were given three days leave and one guinea each to cover their expenses. (42) The fact that the Dean, Dr. Liddell, was a member of the Inscription Committee may well have led to this decision, (43) and the fact that the Imperial Insurance Company had accepted £25,000 of the £100,000 insurance cover for the Crystal Palace may well have influenced the directors to give their staff two days leave. (44) Many individuals, in commerce, industry and many areas of government, had a personal interest in ensuring that the Exhibition was a success and attracted as many visitors as possible, and many were prepared to spend their own

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(38) Dictionary of National Biography, Volume IV, 1950, p. 591

(39) The Stonehaven Journal, 15th July, 1851

(40) Y. ffrench, The Great Exhibition: 1851, London, 1950, p. 37

(41) The North of Scotland Gazette, 1st July, 1851.

(42) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 14th June, 1851.

(43) ffrench, op. cit., p. 135

(44) Guildhall Library, Imperial Insurance Company Board Minutes, ms. 12, 160A, 14th May and 12th July, 1851

money to send their workers and families.

Other employers were more self-interested. The Admiralty did not follow the example of the Queen and send sailors, but dockyard workers were given leave to attend. They were warned that they were expected to attend the Exhibition and they were asked to report on any new machines or processes that might be of value in their work. (45) The length of leave given appears to have been varied to take into account the distance from London. The workers at Woolwich were given two days, (46) while the workers at Devonport were given fourteen days, four of which were with pay. They came up in July on the Irish packet steamer Ajax. (47) Most large towns had learned societies to encourage science, technology and the arts and they depended on employers and businessmen for their finances. The Exhibition was an opportunity for these societies to further their aims and educate deserving workers by paying for their visits. William Andrews was a silk weaver in Coventry, who was eventually to found his own firm and become a local councillor. His employer in 1851 was a W. H. Bray, who was also a member of the governing committee of the Coventry School of Design. He was awarded a prize of £1-10s. and he used this money to pay for a week's visit. The School awarded in all one prize of £2, three prizes of £1-10s. and three prizes of £1. (48) Bray, and other textile employers like him, must have heard

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(45) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 31st May, 1851

(46) ibid., 31st May, 1851

(47) The Western Times, 5th July, 1851

(48) V. E. Chancellor, Master and Artisan in Victorian England, London, 1969, p. 14

of the Jacquard semi-automatic loom (49) and sending a few of their more intelligent workers to London for a few days was a reasonably cheap way of alerting all their workers to the potential dangers of foreign competition. Andrews does not say if he described his experiences to his employer and his fellow workers, but it is inconceivable that he did not do so. The growing power of French industry and the need to make British industry aware of that power was certainly in the mind of Henry Cole (50) and his anxiety does seem to have influenced the behaviour of British industrialists in at least one way.

There were thus many cases where sending workers to the Exhibition was as much in the interests of the employers who paid for the visits as in the interests of the workers who went. But there are many other cases where the desire to ensure the success of the Exhibition or to make the workers aware of technological progress was not the motive. Indeed, for many employers it is difficult to see what useful technical knowledge could have been acquired. In most of these cases the visit to London was used as an incentive to improve relations between workers and employers.

The banks and the insurance companies were among the first of the business organisations to use the Exhibition to reward and encourage their staffs, and this was done on a surprisingly wide scale. The London & County Banking Company, the London & Westminster Bank and the National Provincial Bank of England appear to have been the first to do so. The Board of the London & County Bank agreed on

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(49) Bird, op. cit., p. 12

(50) ibid., p. 11

6th May 1851:

> "that the Officers in the service of the Company be respectively permitted to visit the Great Exhibition and that 10s. be presented to each Officer residing at a distance beyond 10 miles from London, and 5s. to those within that distance, for the purpose of defraying their expenses, and that the General Manager be requested to adopt the necessary measures for carrying this resolution into effect." (51)

The directors of the London & Westminster Bank were rather more generous and resolved:

> "that the sum of one pound be presented to every gentleman on the Establishment for the purpose of visiting the Industrial Exhibition, and that the Managers do arrange to grant the necessary leave of absence so as to interfere as little as possible with the business of the Bank." (52)

The National Provincial Bank went even further and

> "ordered that each of the Clerks in the London Office be allowed 4 days holiday and a Donation of one Guinea to visit the Great

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(51) London and County Banking Company Board Minutes, 6th May, 1851. Information kindly supplied by Miss J. M. R. Campbell, Archivist, National Westminster Bank Limited.

(52) London and Westminster Bank Board Minutes, 7th May, 1851. National Westminster Bank Limited.

Exhibition." (53)

The insurance companies were not to be outdone by these examples of generosity - for it should be remembered that most of these examples were widely quoted both in the London and the provincial press and this must have had some cumulative effect, which must have been welcomed by those anxious to ensure the success of the Exhibition. The Alliance, British & Foreign Life and Fire Assurance Company apppears to have been the first. The Company had already declined to contribute anything to the funds of the Exhibition, (54) and on 30th April 1851 the directors were informed that one of their clerks had disappeared with £152 and was believed to have sailed for America, so it would have been hardly surprising if the directors had viewed their staff rather sourly. (55) But despite this, or perhaps because of it, the directors only one week later "resolved that the Clerks & Managers of the Company have four days each ceded to them for viewing the Great Exhibition - £1 each be voted to them for this purpose." (56) The Church of England Assurance Institution quickly followed suit. Clerks were given leave for four days and the sum of nine guineas was voted

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(53) National Provincial Bank of England Board Minutes, 9th May, 1851. National Westminster Bank Limited.

(54) Guildhall Library, Alliance, British & Foreign Life and Fire Assurance Company Board Minutes, Ms. 12, 162A, 27th February, 1850

(55) ibid., 30th April, 1850

(56) ibid., 7th May, 1851

to cover the cost of the admissions. (57) Others quickly followed. The Atlas Insurance Company gave four days leave, (58) and the generosity of Baring Brothers Bank and the Imperial Insurance Company have already been noted. The Globe Insurance Company, (59) the Union Assurance Society, which was already in the habit of giving holidays to named individuals rather than to the staff as a whole at one time, (60) and the Provident Clerks' Life Association, (61) all made similar arrangements for their clerical staff. Very few of the major banks or insurance companies seem to have stood aloof. There is no evidence that the Guardian Assurance Company made any arrangements, (62) and the Sun Fire Insurance Company was engaged in working out a new salary structure for its staff, so its lack of interest is perhaps understandable. (63)

The initial impetus thus came from companies based in London. Leave could be arranged without having to

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(57) Guildhall Library, Church of England Assurance Institution Board Minutes, Ms. 12, 160D, 9th May, 1851.

(58) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 10th May, 1851.

(59) ibid., 10th May, 1851

(60) Guildhall Library, Union Assurance Company, Fire Committee Minutes, Ms. 14,022, 27th May, 1851

(61) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 24th May, 1851

(62) Guildhall Library, Guardian Assurance Company Papers, Ms. 14,281, Volume 7, 1845-52

(63) ibid., Sun Fire Insurance Company Board Minutes, Ms. 11,931/33, 4th June, 1851

take account of the time and cost of travelling. Companies in the provinces, however, had to face greater expense and a longer leave of absence. They had to be more generous than their London counterparts. On 31st May the directors of the County of Gloucester arranged that the "Clerks at the several Branches be allowed £5 each and sufficient time, at the discretion of the Managers, to visit the Great Exhibition." (64) Becketts & Company, a banking firm in Leeds, also gave their staff £5 and four days leave and even arranged free accommodation in London. The leave was staggered in order to prevent the disruption of business. (65) The clerks at the Gloucestershire Banking Company received merely £3 to cover their expenses, (66) but those at Charles Tennant & Company of Glasgow received £10, (67) as did those at the Liverpool Fire Assurance Company (68) and the Union Bank of Scotland. (69) The Liverpool Union Bank was careful to ensure that the apprentices were also included in this arrangement, and staff in the branches in the small towns around Liverpool. In these cases £10 represented

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(64) County of Gloucester Bank Board Minutes, 31st May, 1851. Information kindly supplied by Mr. M.D. Roberts, Archivist, Lloyds Bank Limited.

(65) The Leeds Mercury, 31st May, 1851. E.B. Dennison, M.P., the bank chairman was also chairman of the Great Northern Railway.

(66) Gloucestershire Banking Company Board Minutes, 6th June, 1851. Lloyds Bank Limited.

(67) The Ayr Observer, 10th June, 1851

(68) The Montrose Review, 13th June, 1851. Information kindly confirmed by the Secretarial Department of the Royal Insurance Company.

(69) The North of Scotland Gazette, 17th June, 1851

as much as six weeks' wages (70) and would certainly have left enough over for bed and board in London after the excursion fares had been paid. Many other firms and organisations were to pay the cost of a staff visit to London, but it is very doubtful if any matched the standard of generosity of these commercial concerns.

Many smaller commercial organisations began to follow these examples. The London Booksellers Association unanimously agreed that its members should give all their assistants a one-day holiday and pay the cost of admission. (71) Other employers in the provinces took similar action. Thomas Latimer, a newspaper editor in Exeter, was a strong supporter of the Exhibition. As we have seen he had played a prominent part in organising the Exeter subscription club, and he missed no opportunity of publicising the Exhibition by drawing attention to employers who gave leave to their staff. In June, for example, he published the names of a number of solicitors in Wells and Exeter who were giving a week's leave and paying the cost of a visit to London. Some in Wells were giving their clerks as much as £5 each. (72) Leeds was another area where the enthusiasm of one energetic individual had done much to stimulate interest. The secretary of the local Exhibition Association, Martin Cawood, worked tirelessly and his publicity efforts met with considerable success, presumably including the Leeds bank already mentioned.

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(70) G. Best, op. cit., pp. 104-110

(71) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 26th May, 1851

(72) The Western Times, 28th June, 1851

Indeed, a solicitor's clerk, who chose to remain anonymous was prompted on 28th June to write to the press complaining that the solicitors of Leeds were doing nothing for their staff, despite the generous example of so many other firms there. (73) This may well have had some effect, for in the middle of August the Leeds newspapers were able to report that solicitors in Leeds, Horbury and Gomersall, were giving staff a week off and £4 to cover their expenses. (74) This may seem less generous than some of the examples quoted earlier, but it should be remembered that railway competition had reduced the excursion fare from Leeds to London to 5s. One of the papers was moved to comment:

> "We are glad to learn that some of the solicitors and several of the merchants and manufacturers in this town have given various sums of money to those in their employ for the purpose of visiting the Great Exhibition. We would say to all, 'Go and do likewise.'" (75)

The railway and steamboat and dock companies faced a difficult choice. They were likely to make money conveying passengers to the Exhibition, so it was logical that they should support it. On the other hand, the extra business would stretch their resources of staff and stock to the uttermost and everyone's help would be needed. Faced with this choice, however, most of the major companies

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(73) The Leeds Mercury, 28th June, 1851

(74) ibid., 16th August, 1851

(75) The Leeds Intelligencer, 16th August, 1851

agreed to allow leave and to provide free transport to London.

The clerks of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway seem to have been the first to raise the issue. They wrote to the Traffic Committee of the London & North Western asking for free passes over that company's lines to London. The Committee had not yet considered the position of its own staff and the request was rejected. But Captain Huish, who, as we have seen, was keen to encourage Exhibition traffic, was empowered to give free passes to "such of the principal Officers as he may deem eligible." (76) But, while the London & North Western was still considering the problem, other companies were taking action. The Iron Steam Boat Company and the Citizen Steam Boat Company, both of which operated on the Thames, announced that they would give their staff two days holiday and 5s. each. This covered some 500 employees. (77) The London Docks Company was slightly less generous, giving its clerks only one day and the cost of admission. (78) The Commercial Committee of the London & South Western Railway recommended to the directors that all staff should be given leave of absence with pay, and staff outside London should also be given free travel. It was proposed that "the men married and having families

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(76) British Transport Archives, London & North Western Railway, General Road & Traffic Committee, LNWR 1, Piece 140, 9th May, 1851

(77) Illustrated London News, 7th June, 1851

(78) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 14th June, 1851

Chapter 8.

Visits Organised by Industry.

Prince Albert and Henry Cole seem to have seen the Exhibition primarily in terms of improving relationships between nations and of raising standards of taste, particularly in the area of manufactured goods. They believed that Britain had much to learn, above all from France, about taste and design. It is doubtful if either of them thought that the Exhibition would be a major factor leading to better class and industrial relations in Britain; but such a hope was already in the minds of some others before the Exhibition actually opened.

Towards the end of 1850, when the Exhibition was still under considerable attack, Louis A. Chamerovzow produced a book defending the ideas behind the Exhibition and trying to refute many of the criticisms made against it. He argued that it would help the working classes to understand their place in society and this understanding would help to prevent strikes and industrial unrest:

> "When national productiveness is paralysed by such calamaties, the natural prosperity receives a check, and the national wealth ceases to benefit the producers of it because they fall the first victim." (1)

It seems doubtful, however, if many workers would have been impressed by this line of reasoning. What role the Exhibition was to play in persuading a prospective striker that he would be the first to suffer during a strike was not made clear by

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(1) L. A. Chamerovzow, The International Exhibition of 1851, London, 1851, p. 15

Chamerovzow. His book is typical of much of the cloudy thinking and vague idealism that surrounded the Exhibition; indeed there are many works worse than his. (2) But, often obscured by a mass of verbiage, there is evidence of a certain amount of clear and shrewd thinking. As early as 21st February, 1850, at a meeting at Westminster to raise subscriptions for the Exhibition, one of the main speakers was Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford and soon to emerge as an opponent of Darwin. His theme was the dignity of labour and, although he did not use the term, he was concerned about the problems created by large-scale production. He referred specifically to the "sub-division of labour." (3) This form of work organisation was likely "to contract the mind of the labourer, by his whole attention becoming fixed upon the simple production of that one part of the fabric in which he is engaged, instead of contemplating the product as a whole." (4) This was undesirable and even dangerous. But if a worker came to visit the Exhibition, he would see "how his particular work bears its part in the production of a great result." (5) He would thus be more satisfied with his own role as a worker and a member of society. Indeed, both sides of industry would benefit from being able

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(2) See for example, Rev. J. Stoughton, The Palace of Glass and the Gathering of the People, London, 1851, or, Excelsior, Dial of the World, London, 1851, for the strength of religious feeling that was roused by the Exhibition.

(3) Victoria and Albert Museum, Collected Documents, No. 274, reference AR-B-F.

(4) ibid.

(5) ibid.

to take a closer look at each other, "it will bring together the producer, whose whole power lies in his skill, and the capitalist whose whole power lies in his capital - the two who must necessarily work together." (6) The Bishop's words were widely reported in the press and must have given food for thought to many of the owners and managers of industry, for many of them were to put his ideas into practice.

With the publicity given to the formation of local subscription associations, it is hardly surprising that groups of workers in individual factories should see themselves forming the basis of such an organisation. By late 1850 many of the northern textile factories had such associations, usually formed by the workers themselves. The funds were subscribed from their weekly paypackets. In Leeds some of the biggest mills, including John Brooke & Sons, Starkey Brothers, Armitage Brothers, J. & H. Wrigley & Company and the Hunslet Mills, all had such associations. (7) Their officers were elected by the workers themselves, but they could usually rely on the co-operation of the employers. An employer would have had to be very stupid not to have seen the value of a labour force regularly paying money into a subscription fund and not anxious to risk losing an outing to London by any action that might interfere with the regular flow of money. In Nottingham the employers in the lace firms were eager to co-operate and offered a week's

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(6) ibid.

(7) Journal of the Exhibition, ibid., 7th December, 1850

holiday if the employees wanted to take it. (8) In Kidderminster a week's holiday was also promised and foremen were encouraged by the employers to act as organisers. (9) In many of these cases it is not always clear who took the initiative, but very often it came from the workers themselves, with the employers agreeing to assist.

There were of course advantages to both sides in these agreements. In some cases the employers were persuaded to take charge of the savings funds. A factory owner was less likely to be tempted by a few pounds in cash than an ordinary worker suddenly elected to the post of treasurer. It was well known that some friendly societies had been bankrupted by dishonest officers. (10) The other advantage for the workers was that employers might be encouraged by the regular saving of their employees into offering financial help.

One such case is worth describing because of the attention it received in the newspapers of Yorkshire. The workers of the Harden Mills in Bingley had begun to collect for an excursion when the owner, Robert Milligan, stepped in and took charge. He took responsibility for the money that had been collected and he organised the excursion on the understanding that any extra expense would be met from his own pocket. In July Milligan took 31 men and nine women to London for a week, the party staying at the Belle Sauvage Inn at Ludgate Hill. They visited not only the Exhibition,

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(8) ibid., 7th December, 1850; Illustrated London News, 11th January, 1851.

(9) ibid., 7th December, 1850

(10) Illustrated London News, 12th April, 1851, report on The Savings of the Poor.

be allowed to bring with them, free of expense, their wives and where there are children - one child." (79) There was the usual proviso that this should be organised "in such a manner as will least interfere with the public traffic and the regular business of the Company." (80) This company already had a tradition of exceptional enlightenment in its treatment of staff. It had set up a friendly society for staff at the Nine Elms depot and by February 1855 some 600 out of the eligible 695 had joined. In 1852 it was to set up a casualty fund to which both it and the staff contributed, and compensation was payable in the event of an accident. In July 1850 the Nine Elms staff had set up a society to provide evening classes and a reading room. The company fully supported this and provided £100 to purchase books, £30 a year for running expenses and a number of lecturers. (81) The provision of leave and expenses in 1851 was thus firmly within the company's policy. After the Exhibition had closed the company rewarded the traffic staff with a shareout of £1,300 for their extra efforts. (82)

The Great Northern Railway took action in two stages. Free passes were issued "at the discretion of the General Manager" to all married clerks. (83) Wives, children over

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(79) British Transport Archives, London & South Western Railway, Commercial Committee, LSW 1, Piece 162, 6th June, 1851

(80) ibid., 6th June, 1851

(81) R. A. Williams, The London & South Western Railway, Volume 1, Newton Abbot, 1968, pp. 231-2

(82) ibid., p. 165

(83) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Railway, Executive Committee, Rail 236, Piece 72, 10th June, 1851

eight years and infants in arms would also be conveyed free. This seems to leave a curious gap between other infants and children over eight. Presumably, they were considered not old enough to appreciate a visit to the Exhibition, but old enough to be left at home with relatives or friends. Unmarried clerks also received a pass and a "second pass for a female relative or friend," a curious concession which seems to accept as perfectly proper the idea of a man taking a female companion on an outing to London. (84) Officers and clerks of allied companies were included in this generosity, but not their families. The company may well have had a change of heart after seeing the policy of other companies, for on 15th July the Board decided that guards, drivers and porters should be given four days leave and a free pass. (85) Certainly before this extra concession had been made, other companies had made similar arrangements. The directors of the Great Western Railway agreed on 29th May that all staff should have four days leave and a free pass to London. (86) Similar arrangements were made by the Board of the London & North Western on 14th June. (87) This company shared many of the attitudes of the London & South Western Railway. The description by Francis Head of the reading room, the mobile library, the baths and

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(84) ibid., 10th June, 1851

(85) ibid., Great Northern Railway, Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 15th July, 1851

(86) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 14th June, 1851

(87) British Transport Archives, London & North Western Railway, Board Minutes, LNWR 1, Piece 21, 14th June, 1851

the other amenities of the Wolverton depot is too well-known to repeat here. (88) The General Manager, Mark Huish, was in favour of weekly half-day holidays and gradually able to introduce this in the 1850's for office staff. (89) The Board returned to the subject of leave a month after the original decision and decided that "it was inadvisable to pay the wages of such servants as might avail themselves of this privilege - for the time during which they may be absent on such leave." (90) After the closure of the Exhibition the subject was again examined. It was decided that gratuities should be awarded to the staff for the extra work which had been done, but those who had taken leave of absence to attend the Exhibition "shall be considered as compensated." (91) Huish recommended that the staff of the Euston establishment should receive a week's pay and the staff at Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham should receive three day's pay and this was agreed by the Board. He later reported that this had cost £1,209. (92) Since the company's labour force was over 10,200 at this time, (93) a considerable proportion must have taken the opportunity to visit London.

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(88) Head, op. cit., p. 89

(89) Gourvish, op. cit., p. 255

(90) British Transport Archives, London & North Western Railway, Board Minutes, LNWR 1, Piece 21, 11th June, 1851

(91) ibid., 14th November, 1851

(92) ibid., 6th February, 1852

(93) Head, op. cit., p. 112

The directors of the South Eastern Railway gave the workers "a free excursion for three days, with liberty to take their wives and families to London and back for a single fare." (94) The Midland Railway gave four days but seems to have made no provision for families. (95) The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway seems to have made no provision for staff, except those in the workshops at Brighton. They were conveyed as a group from Brighton to London Bridge and from there by steamer to Westminster, all at the expense of the company. (96) But the traffic staff were not ignored and gratuities amounting to £432-6-6d. were awarded "for extra work during the past year by reason of the Great Exhibition, and for general good conduct." (97) Eight clerks in the Audit Office and the Secretary's Office "upon whom extra Labour has devolved, by reason of the Great Exhibition" were each awarded £5. (98) It was probably felt that the distance between Brighton and London was so short that traffic staff could be left to make their own way to the Exhibition, but that the workshop staff in Brighton required special consideration and, they would be the ones who might receive some technical benefit.

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(94) British Transport Archives, South Eastern Railway, Board Minutes, SER 1, Piece 28, 10th July, 1851

(95) Thomas Cook, The Excursionist, 21st June, 1851

(96) British Transport Archives, London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, correspondence taken from Board Minutes, LBS 1, Piece 248, 24th June, 1851

(97) ibid., Piece 68, 12th January, 1852

(98) ibid., Piece 68, 12th January, 1852

It is doubtful if all the smaller railway companies made similar arrangements for their staff, but some certainly did so. As mentioned above, the Great Northern Railway was careful to include the staff of allied lines in its provision. The Bristol & Exeter gave leave of absence and free passes which included wives and one child. (99) It is likely that further research would reveal more examples. But is is already quite clear that the major railway companies, despite the strain placed upon them by the surge of Exhibition traffic, did make considerable efforts to ensure that their workers were able to attend. Where this was not possible, the extra efforts made by the workers were rewarded by cash payments. The railway companies required strict discipline from their employees, but they were paternalistic and tried hard to foster a sense of company loyalty by helping to establish friendly societies, schools and churches. (100) Using the Great Exhibition as an excuse to give their workers holidays, free travel and cash gratuities clearly fits within this policy and the success of this paternalism can be judged by the infrequency of labour disputes in the 1850's. (101)

None of the omnibus firms in London, still a mass of quite small concerns and not yet grouped into the London General Omnibus Company, appears to have made any effort to give leave or extra money to their employees,

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(99) The Western Times, 9th August, 1851

(100) Pollins, op. cit., Chapter 4, particularly pp. 75 & 81

(101) ibid., p. 81

which is perhaps understandable in view of the vast increase in omnibus traffic in London generated by the Exhibition. Fares went up and extra vehicles had to be brought into use. (102) The employees, nevertheless, did have their champions. A 'resident of New Bromley' wrote at length to the press praising the omnibus drivers and claimed that it was a disgrace that the employers had not followed the example of other firms by arranging for the workers to visit the Exhibition. (103) But this anonymous champion appears to have met with no response.

Many manufacturers were more enlightened. The main contribution made by factory owners and industrialists was to allow their workers to take holidays. Many workers had no qualms about taking Monday off when it suited them. The idea of 'Saint Monday' was a common concept and the phrase itself was in widespread use. (104) But employers were less prepared to accept absenteeism later in the week, for this interrupted the rhythm of work. (105) Equally, employers would not lightly overlook an absence which stretched over several days. It is clear, however, on this occasion permission was given freely and on a wide scale. John Tod in his diary mentions obtaining

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(102) T. C. Barker & M. Robbins, A History of London Transport, Volume 1, London, 1963, p. 61

(103) The Morning Chronicle, 13th September, 1851

(104) Sidney, op. cit., p. 107; T. Wright, Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes, London, 1867, p. 115

(105) Wright, op. cit., p. 115

leave of absence in the most natural and casual way, and this was a common pattern. (106) The newspapers rarely mentioned this; comment was usually reserved for employers who provided more than just time off. It is from diaries and biographies that we can see that the experience of John Tod was far from unique.

A Manchester businessman, Louis Hayes, was 15 in 1851 and he had only started work in a warehouse the previous year. He spent some days in London in company with his family and he seems to have had no difficulty in obtaining time off. (107) William Whiteley was another youth who went to the Exhibition. He had started work as an apprentice draper in Wakefield in 1848 and he was given his first holiday in 1851 just to go to London. One biographer has suggested that his experience in the Crystal Palace may have given him his first vision of the great department store he was later to build up. (108) Joseph Gutteridge was one of the very few Victorian artisans to keep a diary. He was a weaver in Coventry and his employer, a Mr. Dalton, gave him a week's holiday. He wrote that his trip to London "was then the longest journey I had ever undertaken." (109) Gutteridge was later to go further still, for in 1867 he was sent by the Coventry Society of Arts to visit

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(106) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., p. 6

(107) Hayes, op. cit., pp. 131 & 215

(108) R. S. Lambert, The Universal Provider, London, 1938, p. 21

(109) Chancellor, op. cit., p. 142

the Paris Exhibition. Many employers behaved like Mr. Dalton, but few employed men who kept diaries to record that fact.

Other employers did more and approached the generosity of the banks and insurance companies. Both large and small employers were involved. In London a Mr. Wells, owner of a workshop producing floor cloths in Camberwell, sent 30 workers and paid for their admission. After their visit they were "regaled with a good dinner at his expense." (110) Larger organisations were not to be outdone. Truman, Hanbury, Buxton & Company, a brewing firm, sent 300 men. They were given two days holiday and 5s. to cover their expenses. (111) Messrs. T. & H. Christy & Company, of Gracechurch Street, gave some 600 employees a "holyday" and, as well as paying the cost of admission, arranged conveyance to and from the Crystal Palace. (112).

Firms outside London do not seem to have been deterred, as well they might have been, by the extra problems of distance and travel. Some had a special interest. One of the largest carpet firms of Wilton, Messrs. Blackmore sent some 500 workers and paid all their expenses. It had a number of carpets on display and wanted the workers to see what they, and no doubt their rivals, had produced. (113) One manufacturer in Luton even sent his workers in specially made straw suits to advertise his products. But all the newspapers seem to have countered this by failing to mention

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(110) Illustrated London News, 7th June, 1851

(111) The Morning Chronicle, 5th August, 1851

(112) The Times, 28th May, 1851

(113) The Morning Chronicle, 11th September, 1851

either his name or his product. (114)

Most manufacturers, however, seem to have had no such direct motivation. From his factories in Bath and Bristol, Sir John Eyre sent a large party which included families as well as workers. Six of the children were lost in the Crystal Palace, but this had been provided for. All of them had been given labels and the missing six were easily found. (115) One of the largest groups was organised by a Mr. Fussell, who sent 500 workers from his factory in Trowbridge and 400 from Frome on successive days in July. (116) Smaller groups were naturally more common. The enlightened Quaker biscuit firm of Reading, Huntley & Palmer sent 130 workers and paid their expenses. George Palmer was a paternalistic employers who seems to have enjoyed very good relations with his workers. From 1846 he and his partners had provided factory suppers at their own expense. The 1851 excursion was to be the first of many; the firm continued to send workers to the Crystal Palace after its transfer to Sydenham. (117) This paternalistic attitude was not unusual. Many other examples could be quoted from the pages of local newspapers, where these events were widely publicised. This publicity must have had a cumulative effect. The work of Martin Cawood in the Leeds area and the publicity given to

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(115) The Western Times, 5th July, 1851

(116) The Railway Times, 12th July, 1851

(117) ibid., 9th August, 1851; kindly confirmed by Mr. M. Paxton, Public Relations Manager, Associated Biscuits Ltd.; see also T. A. B. Corley, Quaker Enterprise in Biscuits, London, 1973, p. 102

the generosity of legal and banking firms in the city have already been mentioned. It is hardly surprising then to find manufacturing firms doing the same. One cloth manufacturing firm, John Sykes & Son gave their workers what the newspapers described as a "liberal donation" to cover the cost of fares and lodgings. (118) But William Watson & Company, a chemical firm, went much further. Their workers were given eight days holiday with full pay. They also received "a liberal sum of money to defray expenses." (119)

It might have been expected that the agricultural interest would have had little interest in the Exhibition, for it was clearly seen by most people as a symbol of the triumph of British industry and free trade. The Corn Law struggles of the 1840's had left deep wounds and the cause of agricultural protection was still a live political issue. Most protectionist newspapers and commentators were either hostile or indifferent. One such newspaper expressed a common opinion when it admitted that the Exhibition would be "interesting and astonishing.....we cannot fancy that it will do much harm, nor do we imagine it will work any great amount of good." (120) As the Exhibition moved from idea to reality, however, the same newspaper gave a totally different picture. Its account of the opening ceremony

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(118) The Leeds Times, 2nd August, 1851; The Leeds Mercury, 2nd August, 1851; The Leeds Intelligencer, 2nd August, 1851

(119) The Leeds Mercury, 16th August, 1851

(120) The Montrose Standard, 1st September, 1850

was lengthy and favourable, (121) and as the summer wore on, it was ready to admit that the Exhibition was a resounding success. This was a common pattern. Most of those who had opposed it were prepared to admit its success. Equally important, it must be remembered that not all landowners were Protectionists and it is a mistake to assume that the terms are synonymous. (122) There were many landowners who supported both Free Trade and the Exhibition.

Many of the landowners in this group followed the example of businessmen and industrialists by sending their tenants or labourers to the Exhibition. Lord Leigh and his father had both opposed protection. (123) All his tenants were brought to London at his expense. (124) The Duke of Norfolk sent 60 labourers from Arundel. They were provided with breakfast before they set out and wore green rosettes. (125) Sir John Astley, an eccentric soldier and sportsman, described his experience with his tenants; "Our yokels at Everleigh were very keen to have a peep at the show; so my brother Hugh and I chartered two large omnibuses, which were well filled inside and out." The party went by rail to Paddington and toured the centre of London and had "a good feed all round,"

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(121) ibid., 9th May, 1851

(122) A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement, London, 1962, p. 322

(123) Dictionary of National Biography, Volume XI, 1952, p. 870

(124) The Brechin Advertiser, 1st July, 1851

(125) The Ayr Observer, 16th September, 1851

before visiting the Exhibition. The outing was a great success, "hardly one of them had ever been on a railway, and not one of them in London." Not surprisingly, "for years afterwards that trip was the most interesting topic in the village public house." (126)

In some cases there were combined efforts by groups of landowners. Some 800 villagers from Godstone in Surrey each contributed 1s. 6d. and the balance of the cost was paid by the local clergy and gentry. (127) In East Anglia whole villages were affected in this way. The clergy and gentry of Hurlow arranged a special train for their "servants and domestics", (128) and the tradesmen of Maldon and Braintree closed their businesses for a day to allow their employees to attend. Some 300 went from Maldon and 172 from Braintree. (129)

There were also a number of landowners whose motives may have gone beyond simple charity or the desire to improve relations with their employees. Disraeli by 1851 was much less tied to the cause of agricultural protection than many of his supporters and, unlike many in his Party, he did support the Exhibition. With an eye to the future, he was full of praise for the genius of Prince Albert. (130) It is certainly interesting that

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(126) Sir John Astley, Fifty Years of My Life, London, 1894, p. 116

(127) The Railway Times, 21st June, 1851

(128) ibid., 21st June, 1851

(129) Illustrated London News, 26th July, 1851

(130) W. F. Monypenny & G. E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, Volume I, London, 1929, p. 1119

a number of landed families with whom he had close personal links also sent some of their employees. The Duke of Northumberland paid for a visit by 150 farm workers from Alnwick (131) and Lady Rolle not only sent 20 labourers from Bicton, she arranged for them to stay at her London home. (132) Henry Drummond, M.P. for West Surrey, went himself with some 60 of his workers and arranged for others to go on a later date. (133) He was regarded as a generous landlord for providing his labourers with allotments. (134)

Some conclusions can be drawn from all this activity. Some employers, because of their personal involvement, did have an interest in trying to ensure the success of the Exhibition by encouraging visitors. But this was only a small proportion of the employers who sent their workers and the attendance figures soon showed that help of this kind was unnecessary. Many more employers, aware of the potential dangers of foreign competition, wanted to encourage the same awareness of this among their employees. An exposure to technological innovation might make their workers more willing to accept change in their own places of work. Some employers may have been swept along by the example of others who were so widely publicised in the newspapers. But most employers who gave holidays and financial help, in some cases on a very generous scale, must have hoped

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(131) The Leeds Times, 21st June, 1851

(132) The Western Times, 26th July, 1851

(133) The Stonehaven Journal, 1st July, 1851

(134) Dictionary of National Biography, Volume VI, 1952, p. 29

for some return, on the lines suggested by the Bishop of Oxford, when he spoke of owners and workers coming closer together. The Exhibition was thus the occasion for a very considerable exercise in industrial and commercial paternalism. How successful this exercise was, it is impossible to judge. One would need detailed company records of strikes, absenteeism, productivity and so on. The greater stability of the 1850's was no doubt due to the absence of the economic depression which had marked many of the years during the 1840's; nevertheless the Exhibition may have played some small part in bringing about greater industrial harmony, by encouraging industrial paternalism and improving industrial relations.

This paternalism was evident in a wide range of commercial and industrial organisations, but some examples do stand out. Banking and insurance were heavily represented, as were the railway companies. So too was manufacturing, especially the textile industries and here the activities of the subscription clubs seem to have played an important part by setting an example. Geographically the range is again wide, with examples coming from areas as far apart as South Wales and Edinburgh. Local newspapers, picking up items from other areas of the country, may have had some influence here. But the two outstanding areas were clearly London and Leeds. It was employers in these two cities who supported the Exhibition most strongly. The case of London is hardly surprising; Leeds perhaps more so. Railway fares were very cheap, but so they were in other parts of the country. Some employers may have seen the need to relieve the monotony induced by mechanisation, but Leeds was not the only

heavily industrialised area. One can only conclude that the efforts made by the local secretary, Martin Cawood, the support he received from the newspapers in Leeds and the success of the local subscription associations provided the necessary impetus. Confirmation for this comes from Exeter and the West Country, another area where there was strong support, where Thomas Latimer, editor of The Western Times, used his newspaper to publicise the Exhibition on every possible occasion. Whatever the explanation, the motive is clear. Employers spent their money on sending workers to London because they believed that they would receive a return in the form of better industrial relations.

Chapter 9.

Visits Organised by Charity and Visits by School Children.

The extent to which the Exhibition was used as an exercise in improving industrial relations has been examined in the previous chapter. It should also be noted that the Exhibition was the occasion of a considerable volume of private charity. The Morning Chronicle noted that

> "the kind feeling exhibited by the wealthy classes towards the poor may be further inferred from the fact that nearly 11,000 persons.....were treated to a visit to the Exhibition at a total cost of £2,735 paid for admission, to say nothing of the much larger sums disbursed for their conveyance to and from the building." (1)

To clarify this figure would require an agreed definition of 'charity.' Some of the visits organised by employers and landowners may have involved some degree of charity, but the aim of improving class and industrial relations seems to have played a more significant part. Other visits, however, were organised and paid for by individuals who had no opportunity of receiving any tangible reward for their generosity. It is within this definition that the figure of "nearly 11,000" would come.

Here, as one would expect, the clergy played a considerable part. The Queen described in her diary seeing

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(1) The Morning Chronicle, 13th October, 1851

three groups from the parishes of Crowhurst, Linchfield and Langford in Kent and Surrey, a total of 800 people. The villagers had subscribed 2s. 6d. each to cover the cost, but the initiative and the organisation had come from the parish clergy. (2) In many other cases the clergy provided not only the organisation but also the money. The Reverend G. H. Fell sent 50 children from Goring in Oxfordshire, (3) and the Reverend C. Fox Chawner sent 17 old people with a total age of 1,201 years in a horse van from Bletchingly in Surrey. The party was under the supervision of a stripling of 47. (4) Other clergy were involved at Harlow, but in a slightly more restricted way. They, and some of the local gentry, hired a special train to London for the benefit of their servants and domestics. (5) This could perhaps be considered in the category of an 'industrial visit.'

The clergy were not, as the Harlow case indicates, the only ones involved in this way. Sir John Hare of Bath sent 50 girls from Bath and another 50 from Bristol. (6) William Gladstone was even more generous. He not only paid for the admission of 50 of his fellow parish-

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(2) The Queen's Exhibition Journal, quoted in C. R. Fay, The Palace of Industry, 1851, Cambridge University Press, 1951, p. 60

(3) The Railway Times, 19th July, 1851

(4) Illustrated London News, 25th October, 1851

(5) The Railway Times, 21st June, 1851

(6) ibid., 19th July, 1851

ioners, he actually took the group to Hyde Park himself. (7) The 250 inmates of the workhouse of St. George-the-Martyr in Southwark had no such eminent guide, but their admission was paid by public subsciption. (8)

The main beneficiaries of this kind of generosity were, however, not adults but school children. On 13th October The Times reported that pupils from no less than 466 schools had attended, the largest single group being the 900 pupils from Christ's Hospital. (9) This figure had been provided by an official at the Crystal Palace, a Mr. W. Murray who, from 9th July, had been made responsible for keeping records. Mr. Murray believed that before 9th July there had been visits by 21 schools and 4,093 children. In the report by The Times no figure was given for the total number of children. But some details were given for the attendance on certain days,

14 July	15 schools	1,300 children
21 August	15	1,002
18 September	33	2,729
25 September	18	1,374
2 October	25	1,427
8 October	23	1,312

From these figures, together with the earlier figure of 21 schools and 4,093 children, we can obtain an average figure of 89 pupils per school. For the total of 466 schools, this would give a total attendance of 41,474

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(7) The Brechin Advertiser, 15th July, 1851

(8) The Stonehaven Herald, 9th September, 1851

(9) The Times, 13th October, 1851

children.

Also on the 13th October, the Morning Chronicle gave slightly different figures on the school visits, but without indicating their source. (10) It claimed that 43,715 pupils from 510 schools had visited the Exhibition. These figures give an average of 86 pupils per school, which is close enough to indicate that the figures in the two newspapers, although different, are not seriously at variance.

Most of these schools were in London and the south east of England, the Thames valley area being well represented. But schools did come from as far afield as Peterborough, Oxford, Southampton and Wilton. It is not always clear who paid for these expeditions, but in many cases funds were provided by wealthy patrons or by public subscription. The Queen herself set an example by paying for a visit by the children of St. Anne's school, Windsor. (11) Each child was then expected to write an account of the visit. (12) Prince Albert donated 12 season tickets to be given to the best students at the School of Design at Somerset House. (13) Other notable figures were involved in similar ways. Some 300 children from the St. George Parochial school in Hanover Square spent a day at the Exhibition and were then provided with substantial refreshments of tea and cake as a result of public donations. One donor, the Marquis of Westminster, was able to use his

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(10) The Morning Chronicle, 13th October, 1851

(11) The North of Scotland Gazette, 10th June, 1851

(12) Fay, op. cit., p. 62

(13) The North of Scotland Gazette, 3rd June, 1851

influence and have the party admitted an hour early, before the crowds arrived. (14) Lord Shaftesbury was mainly concerned with the display space allocated to the works of the Bible Society, but he did pay for the admission of the boys of the London Ragged School. The Exhibition affected the lives of these particular boys in another way. It was then that the idea came up of using them as shoeblacks and 25 of them cleaned 101,000 pairs of shoes and made some £500 for the school during the Exhibition period. The scheme was in fact so successful that it became a regular part of life at the school and can be counted as one of the more interesting and unusual results of the Exhibition. (15) Miss Burdett Coutts, another prominent figure in the world of Victorian philanthropy, sent all the children from the charity school which she ran. (16)

Lesser known figures were also involved in this way. A Mr. Pilcher, a former sheriff, sent the pupils from St. Clave's Girl's school, (17) and a Mr. Hope sent 130 pupils from a school in Marylebone, "their clean, cheerful and healthful appearance being extremely creditable to the management of the school." (18) But in most cases the

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(14) Illustrated London News, 23rd August, 1851

(15) ibid., 4th October, 1851; E. Hodder, The Life & Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, Volume 2, London, 1886, p. 342

(16) The Leeds Intelligencer, 28th June, 1851

(17) ibid., 5th July, 1851

(18) The Morning Chronicle, 2nd August, 1851

names of these donors have not survived, like those who provided the money to send 152 girls from the Asylum for Female Orphans in Lambeth, (19) or those who sent 1,555 children from a variety of Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist schools in Woolwich. They went to Westminster by steamer and marched to the Crystal Palace accompanied by a band. (20) A similarly large group came from Wilton in Wiltshire. The rector, the Reverend R. C. S. Chermside offered to pay for the admission of all children in the National schools in the parish and he contributed £20 towards the rail fares. (21) This idea was well received in the district and the scheme was expanded. The Countess of Pembroke and Mr. Sidney Herbert joined in and included the children from all the Wilton schools, including those from the workhouse school. They also sent their servants to accompany the party. (22) Some 500 workers in the employ of Messrs. Blakemore, a carpet manufacturing firm in the town, also went at the expense of their employers. (23) The firm wanted the workers to see their own work on exhibit, but they may well have been influenced by the initiative taken by the Reverend Chermside.

The London & North Western Railway was, as we have already seen, a company interested in good relations with its employees. Less than a month after the directors

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(19) Illustrated London News, 4th October, 1851

(20) ibid., 23rd August, 1851

(21) The Western Times, 28th June, 1851

(22) The Morning Chronicle, 11th September, 1851

(23) ibid., 11th September, 1851

agreed to allow staff leave of absence, (24) the Locomotive sub-committee agreed that the children in the company school at Wolverton should be taken to the Exhibition as soon as was convenient. (25)

Most of these excursions seem to have been one-day affairs, but the 30 boys of H.M.S. Excellent were luckier. They applied for leave and were given permission to spend four nights in London. They were accompanied by a master and they stayed at the Sailor's Home in Well Street. (26) Their colleagues at the Naval College at Brest were even luckier. The French government sent them to London by ship and they were able to spend six days at the Exhibition. (27)

One less fortunate group were the boys of Robert Gordon's Hospital in Aberdeen. The governors did make enquiries about sending a party to London and then decided it would be too expensive. (28) The boys had to be content with a trip down the coast to Kinnaird Castle. (29) But it is interesting that the idea was seriously considered by the governors of a school so remote from London.

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(24) British Transport Archives, London & North Western Railway, Board Minutes, LNW 1, Piece 21, 14th June, 1851

(25) ibid., Locomotive Sub-Committee, Piece 224, 8th July, 1851

(26) The Western Times, 12th July, 1851

(27) Illustrated London News, 30th August, 1851

(28) The Aberdeen Herald, 28th June, 1851

(29) ibid., 19th July, 1851

It must not be forgotten that the 40,000 children who attended the Exhibition as members of organised school parties were not the only ones to do so. Many, perhaps as many more, attended with their families. In Yorkshire, for example, the Exhibition had a note-worthy effect on the school system. In Leeds, Sheffield, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield trade was so good that the schools were under considerable pressure. The demand for labour was so strong that many schools had lost not only their older pupils, many trainee teachers had decided that they would be better off in trade. (30) This economic prosperity does, of course, help to explain why so many of the Yorkshire working classes were able to travel to London. But the effect on the schools was less happy. The school inspector for the region, the Reverend F. Watkins, reported that "several teachers assured me that their schools during some of the summer months were almost disorganised by the absence of children, either gone with their parents to see the wonders of London, or kept at home to take charge of the house." (31)

Many of the children who did go to London were probably taken not because of any benefit they might gain from the experience, but because it was easier to take them than to leave them. The doctor and geologist, Gideon Mantell, made bitter comments in his diary about the "vulgar, ignorant, country people: many dirty women with

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(30) Parliamentary Papers, 1852, Volume XV, Report by Rev. F. Watkins, p. 119

(31) ibid., pp. 131-2

their infants were sitting on the seats giving suck with their breasts uncovered, beneath the lovely female figures of the sculptor." (32) Infants in arms would have gained little from the visit. Many others must have been like Dickens. He hated sights anyway and found the Exhibition exhausting. He could not take it in and could remember seeing only the Crystal Fountain and the Amazon. (33) Others would have been like the writer, R. E. Francillon, who found the whole thing very boring. He wrote years later that he was not too young, or too ignorant, or too apathetic, "but it remains in my mind a mere formless blur of colour, heat and crowd, with a delightful iced drink for its solitary detail." (34) He was so "heartily bored" by it that he never visited another Exhibition.

The fifteen year old Louis Hayes was not bored, but he did share some of the bewilderment of Dickens. He felt that there was so much to see that he could see nothing properly. There was only a delightful mixture of trees, statues, fountains, flowers and gay clothes, with the rich tones of the ortan to provide a fairyland atmosphere. Much of the trouble came from the density of the crowd,

"being the last days of the Exhibition the

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(32) E. Cecil Curwen, The Journal of Gideon Mantell, 1818-1852, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 273

(33) ffrench, op. cit., p. 200

(34) R. E. Francillon, Mid-Victorian Memories, London, 1914, p. 49

crowds were enormous, and it was impossible to move about or see anything in detail. If you wanted to get to a particular point, you had almost to fight your way to it, and, when you did so, you had to content yourself with a glimpse of this and a glance at that." (35)

But Hayes did manage to see the Koh-I-Nor. He was disappointed and thought it looked like a piece of ordinary crystal, "but to have returned home and confessed not to have seen the Koh-I-Nor would have been almost tantamount to not seeing the Exhibition." (36) The memories that Hayes retained in later life may have been confused, but they were certainly vivid and his was not a unique experience. One twelve year old girl, later to become famous as Ouida, was entranced and wrote a passionate description in her diary of what she had seen and what she like best. She seems to have been particularly moved by the statue of the Greek slave. (37) R.E. Crompton was even younger than Ouida. As we have seen, he was only six when he visited the Exhibition, but it had an equally vivid impact on his mind. Decades later he described it as "the first real event of my life!" (38) He was greatly impressed by the exhibits of machinery, which may well have influenced his later choice of career. He was also able to remember that,

"the huge elm trees enclosed in the transept

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(35) Hayes, op. cit., pp. 215-6

(36) ibid., p. 216

(37) ffrench, op. cit., p. 262

(38) R. E. Crompton, Reminiscences, London, 1928, p. 4

gave one the impression of a gigantic conservatory. The elm trees, however, did not seem to appreciate their new mode of life, and, in fact, gradually died down within a few years after the building was removed." (39)

No doubt Colonel Sibthorpe was pleased to be vindicated. (40)

The Exhibition clearly had a considerable effect on the minds of many of these young visitors. Although the Reverend Watkins was distressed by its effects on the schools of Yorkshire, he felt that, on balance, it had been beneficial. In addition to the educational experience enjoyed by those children who had visited it, the Exhibition had proved the importance and value of education to the parents. (41) Even children who were not fortunate enough to visit it did not entirely escape its influence. In 1852 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge published a book of lesson plans showing how the contents and implications of the Exhibition should be used in teaching. (42)

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(39) ibid., p. 5

(40) Punch, June, 1850: Cartoon entitled Albert! Spare Those Trees. See C. H. Gibbs-Smith, The Great Exhibition of 1851, A Commemorative Album, London, 1950, p. 140

(41) Parliamentary Papers, 1852, Volume XV, Report by Rev. Watkins, p. 132

(42) Anon., Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected with the Great Exhibition, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852

The Society had strong links with the 955,865 pupils in the 17,015 Church of England Schools, (43) but it is impossible to say how widely this book was sold and circulated. (44) One heavily annotated copy in my possession has a flyleaf inscription marked Tewkesbury, 1896, which indicates that the book remained in use for some time after its publication. The book owes nothing to the monitorial system and is designed to encourage observation and individual thought by the pupils. It is certainly one of the more unusual and worthwhile results of the Exhibition.

The world of Victorian philanthropy was a complex one. The number of charities was immense. There were serious religious differences which encouraged a duplication of effort. But the work done in sending school children, orphans, workhouse inmates and old people to the Exhibition appears to have escaped these problems and to have been an example of philanthropy at its best.

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(43) S. J. Curtis, The History of Education in Great Britain, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 208

(44) The Archivist of the S.P.C.K., Mr. A. E. Barker, has been unable to find any sales returns for this period.

Chapter 10.

Accommodation in London.

The habit of using brief human interest stories in the newspapers existed long before 1851, but the events of 1851 proved to be a rich source of such material. There were stories of bizarre journeys (1) and marathon feats of walking to London. (2) Great publicity was given to workers who took the night trains from Yorkshire, spent the day at the Exhibition and returned home that night ready for work the next morning, thus losing only one day's wages. Special admiration went to those who took sandwiches and spent nothing beyond the 1s. admission. (3) These stories have significance beyond being merely amusing. They create an impression of workers with little free time and even less spare money, able to afford only a minimal visit to London, unable to take their families, unable to afford money for accommodation or the loss of wages that a longer stay would entail. But this would be an incomplete picture; there is considerable evidence that many people did stay in London and make more than one visit to the Exhibition.

It was widely believed that the demand for accommodation of all kinds would be very heavy. Earlier in the year firms in Birmingham were faced with a heavy demand for brass bedsteads (4) and in London there were unusually high sales of furniture. (5) At the end of April there

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(1) The Brechin Advertiser, 20th May, 1851

(2) Illustrated London News, 17th May, 1851

(3) The Leeds Times, 12th July, 1851

(4) ibid., 29th March, 1851

(5) The Montrose Standard, 17th January, 1851

were stories of exceptional prices being demanded for lodgings. An Edinburgh man, who tried to obtain lodgings for his wife and himself, was offered a bedroom and a sitting room at a cost of £31-10s. for the first two weeks of May. He was also asked for an additional deposit of £5-5s. and he was advised that there would be a service charge of £2. (6) But incidents of this kind, although condemned, seem to have roused no great anxiety. Many of the upper and middle classes were to stay in their own houses in town, or with friends or relatives. R. E. Crompton mentioned staying with relatives in his account of his boyhood visit. (7) Others, who were no strangers to London, stayed in their usual lodgings. Mrs. Gaskell, who went to London with her family on 30th June, mentioned in a letter to a friend that they had stayed in their usual lodgings in Panton Square. (8) The upper and middle classes were more readily able to make their own arrangements without being cheated. But there was considerable anxiety for the less experienced and less well informed working classes. One man from Peterborough came to London and intended to stay overnight. But he did not seem to know how to search for lodgings, so he returned to Peterborough, reaching home about midnight. Since he had not completed his tour of the Crystal Palace, he returned to London the next day to do so. (9) Three young men from Glasgow had a rather different problem. They intended to stay a week in London,

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(6) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 3rd May, 1851

(7) Crompton, op. cit., p. 4

(8) J. A. V. Chapple & A. Pollard, The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell, Manchester University Press, 1966, p. 159

(9) Illustrated London News, 25th October, 1851

but they did not trust the lodging house keepers. They brought with them one night shirt, worn permanently under the dress shirt, and three or four dress shirts. The dress shirts were given to a pawnbroker as soon as they arrived in London. When they needed a clean shirt, they returned to "uncle" and exchanged a dirty for a clean. At the end of the week, the dirty shirts were collected and they returned to Glasgow. (10) Long before the 1st May, the Exhibition Commissioners were worried by the attitudes that caused incidents of that kind. Thomas Cook was consulted and he recommended only that visitors be encouraged to use temperance hotels and boarding houses. (11) The Commissioners decided to go further. They felt that they themselves could not become directly involved in the provision of accommodation, but neither could they ignore the problem. They decided to open a registry office at the Old Palace Yard in Westminster for "the names and addresses of persons disposed to provide accommodation for artisans from the country whilst visiting the Exhibition." (12) Officials were appointed to inspect the premises, check the references and register the details. Provincial visitors, and particularly the officers of the subscription associations could thus obtain information in advance. This must have considerably eased the work of these officers.

At least three commercial organisations appeared to rival this service. The Central Registration Office opened in the Strand and soon claimed to have accommodation

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(10) The Brechin Advertiser, 22nd July, 1851

(11) Pudney, op. cit., p. 103

(12) The Home Circle, Number 82, 25th January, 1851: Guide to London in English, French and German.

ranging from 25 guineas a week to 1s. a night. In particular, it had a list of some 2,000 places, "at prices which place it within the means of the artisan visitors." (13) This agency claimed to have places for some 5,000 visitors in all. Another agency opened by a Mr. Henry Bennett was aimed at foreign visitors. In March, 1851 he was talking about 3,000 visitors a week from Europe requiring accommodation. (14) Horace Greeley recommended to his readers the name of John Chapman, an American bookseller in the Strand, who kept lists of rooms to let at reasonable rates. (15) Many others probably kept similar lists.

Many others were interested in the business potential of this area. A Mr. Sidney suggested that some system of parish registers be organised to display the accommodation available. (16) Seymour Clarke, general manager of the Great Northern Railway tried, but failed, to persuade his directors that a warehouse at King's Cross should be equipped as a dormitory. (17) A Mr. Taylor from Rochdale wrote to the press suggesting that most of the soldiers in London could be moved out to allow the barracks to be used as cheap lodgings. (18) In view of the fears in the press and in government circles that London might be flooded with socialists, Chartists and rioters, this was out of the ques-

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(13) The Illustrated Exhibitor, John Cassell, bound edition 1851, p. 75

(14) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 8th March, 1851

(15) Greeley, op. cit., p. 46

(16) Illustrated London News, 8th February, 1851

(17) British Transport Archives, Great Northern Railway, Board Minutes, Rail 236, Piece 16, 4th March, 1851

(18) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 18th January, 1851

tion. Others were more successful in their efforts. A number of Exhibition lodging houses were set up. One such in Victoria Street, Holborn seems to have aimed especially at visitors from the West country. It advertised in the Western Times and bookings could be made through a grocer's shop in Exeter. (19) Bed and breakfast cost 5s. and dinner could be had for 2s. It had 120 beds spread over two houses. The Westminster Model Lodging House was similarly organised, but aimed at visitors coming from Leeds. (20) The most famous of these establishments was set up in a Mechanic's Home in Ranelagh Road, Pimlico by a Mr. Thomas Harrison. It could accommodate 1,000 visitors in two large and two small dormitories. At a cost of 1s. 3d. per night the visitor was provided with soap, towels, newspapers and a band in the smoking room. Breakfast cost 4d. and dinner 8d., and the services of a barber and a doctor were available if required. The Illustrated London News gave a full account of this establishment (21) and the description was very widely copied in the provincial press. Even Henry Mayhew made use of the description in his comic novel of the Sandboys family and their adventures in London. (22) All did not go smoothly for this establishment, however, there was a large fire among the furniture before it opened, (23) and it has been claimed that it was not a success. The thousand beds were never more than a quarter

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(19) The Western Times, 3rd May, 1851

(20) The Leeds Mercury, 14th June, 1851

(21) Illustrated London News, 2nd August, 1851

(22) H. Meyhew, The Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys, London, 1851, p. 16

(23) Illustrated London News, 12th April, 1851

occupied at any one time. Artisan visitors evidently preferred their independence and disliked the regimentation that such a large establishment seemed to necessitate. (24)

This lack of success might have been predicted if those responsible had considered two factors, the origins of London's adult population and the existing provision of accommodation in the city. The 1851 census showed that there were 1,394,963 people aged 20 and over in London, of whom 645,110 had been born there. If those from Ireland, Scotland and overseas are excluded, (25) 601,913 adults had been born in England and Wales and had moved to London. Many of them must have been in a position to offer temporary accommodation to relatives and friends still living in the provinces, which must have reduced the demand for commercial accommodation.

The accommodation market in the middle of the century was in a state of flux. Passenger traffic had been limited in the stage coach era and this had naturally limited the demand for lodgings. The railway system created not only a new volume of passengers, but an increased demand for

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(24) ffrench, op. cit., p. 256

(25) Parliamentary Papers, 1852-53, Volume LXXXVIII, p. 31: 1851 Census.

Ireland	88,542
Scotland	26,487
Foreign Countries	21,366
British Colonies	6,664
Naturalised British	2,712
British Islands	1,643
Born at Sea	526

accommodation. Many of the old coaching inns were in decline; (26) those which survived were usually near stations and able to adapt to the new market. In 1851 La Belle Sauvage in Ludgate Hill was rebuilt to meet the demand for improved accommodation during the Exhibition and renamed the International Hotel, (27) but the original name appears to have remained in use. (28) New railway hotels were built near the main railway stations. The first of these was opened at Euston in September, 1839. (29)

The months just before the Exhibition saw a flood of guides and handbooks to London. These gave a vast amount of information about places to visit, cab-fares and a host of other useful subjects. Considerable information was given about accommodation of all kinds, which is further confirmation that the demand was expected to be heavy. From the material in these guides it is clear that a considerable volume of accommodation was available. One of them claimed that there were 385 hotels, inns and coffee houses which provided accommodation and 820 lodging houses. (30) Another actually named 161 hotels and taverns, (31)

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(26) M. C. Borer, The British Hotel Through the Ages, Guildford, 1972, Chapter 10

(27) H. Clunn, The Face of London, London, 1951, p. 58

(28) The Leeds Intelligencer, 12th July, 1851

(29) A. A. Jackson, London's Terminii, Newton Abbot, 1969, p. 39

(30) London Exhibited in 1851, published by J. Weale, London, 1851, p. 234

(31) The British Metropolis in 1851, published by A. Hall, Virtue & Co., London, 1851, pp. 1-3

and most of these guides had similar, if smaller, lists. Many of these hotels were round the great stations at Euston and King's Cross and the charges were described as moderate. (32)

Of the first class hotels Long's in New Bond Street and Mivart's in Brook Street were the most famous. Prince Henry of the Netherlands and his suite spent seven weeks at the latter when he visited the Exhibition in May and June. (33) Several American writers have left accounts of their experiences in these hotels. D. W. Bartlett, a writer, visited England twice between 1847 and 1851 and he warned his fellow nationals that prices were considerably higher than in similar hotels in New York. This was largely caused by the habit of charging for every item separately and the regular tipping that was everywhere expected. (34) The journalist, Horce Greeley, agreed and claimed that prices in London in 1851 were double those in New York. But he felt that the main cause of this difference was the smallness of London hotels. Most could only accommodate twenty to forty guests and he doubted if there were four in London could accommodate a hundred. Since the costs of management were high, irrespective of size, this partially explained the difference. (35) Mrs.

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(32) The Yorkshireman's Guide to the Great Metropolis and the Crystal Palace, published by M. Bell, Richmond, 1851, p. 2

(33) Illustrated London News, 14th June, 1851

(34) D. W. Bartlett, What I Saw in London, Auburn, Connecticut, 1852, pp. 16-17

(35) Greeley, op. cit., pp. 65-6

George Bancroft, the wife of an American diplomat, came to London in 1846 and stayed at Long's. She and her husband soon moved into a rented house where they could have the use of their books and their own furniture. (36) They too found hotel life expensive, but were impressed by the standard of comfort. Although it was dark and dingy, everything was scrupulously clean and the food was very good. None of these writers gave any real information about prices, but the cost would have been far beyond the resources of most visitors to the Exhibition.

But less expensive hotels were widely available. A hotel of "moderate style" (37) would cost between 6s. and 7s. 6d. per day with a charge of 1s. 6d. for servants. The Burlington and the Queen's were recommended as good family hotels of this class. (38) The Gloucester and Hatchett's were in the same category, but were especially recommended to "sporting gentlemen." (39) The hotels around Leicester Square were considered particularly suitable for French and German visitors and they certainly were used by people of these nationalities according to a survey done in early May by the Journal of the Exhibition, which also found visitors from Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Italy and the United States in this area. (40) The Sabloniere and

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(36) Mrs. G. Bancroft, Letters from England, 1846/9, London, 1904, pp. 10 & 15

(37) The British Metropolis in 1851, op. cit., p. 1

(38) P. Cunningham, Modern London, London, 1851, p. 31

(39) ibid., p. 31

(40) Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 17th May, 1851

the Hotel de Provence provided an excellent cuisine. (41) But views on this area seem to be curiously contradictory, for there were those who argued that it was not a respectable area. (42) One French visitor, Francis Wey was advised that Leicester Square was not suitable for a gentleman to reside and he quickly moved into lodgings in the more respectable circumstances of Bond Street where an apartment cost him 12s. per week. (43)

Osborne's Hotel in Trafalgar Square was less expensive, a room there costing 4s. 6d. per night. (44) Those of the old coaching inns which had survived were in the same price range. The Swan with Two Necks had 100 beds and charged 6s. 6d. for a room, breakfast and servants. (45) Cheaper inns would provide bed and breakfast for 2s. 6d. and one London guidebook listed 24 of these inns. (46) But even this figure could be reduced. Many of the coffee houses and chop houses could provide a few beds for as little as 1s. a night and a good dinner could be had for the same price. (47) Alternatively, a man could buy a steak and have it cooked for him in a public house. Some

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(41) Cunningham, op. cit., p. 31

(42) J. E. Ritchie, The Night Side of London, London, 1861, p. 130

(43) F. Wey, A Frenchman Sees the English in the Fifties, London, 1935, pp. 15 & 231

(44) The Aberdeen Herald, 31st May, 1851

(45) The Stonehaven Herald, 17th June, 1851

(46) A Visit to London During the Great Exhibition, published by Henry Beal, London, 1851, p. 55

(47) ibid., p. 11

potatoes and a pint of porter would bring the whole cost to 9d. (48) The Tod family from Edinburgh dined on several occasions at Batts Dining Rooms in Bucklersbury, where they paid a "moderate charge" for an excellent English dinner of roast beef and plum pudding. (49) They even returned there after a day spent at Richmond, when one might have thought that a meal in their lodgings would have been less tiring, so they must have been satisfied. (50) The Hope Dining Rooms were also in Bucklesbury. Their advertisement stressed that there were no waiters' fees. A portion from a joint cost 6d., rump steak 8d., poultry 1s. and venison 9d. Oxtail soup cost 6d., mock turtle soup 8d. and pudding 3d. Meals were served between noon and 6.00 p.m. (51) Women and children were not always welcome in these establishments. One guidebook listed 35 dining rooms and felt the need to specify 17 where women would be acceptable. (52)

Private lodgings were also available on a considerable scale. The best were to be found around Picadilly and Oxford Street. In the Strand a sitting room and a bedroom cost between one and four guineas a week. (53) The Tod family reserved three bedrooms and a sitting room with a Mr. Arless at 106, Edbury Street. There was, however,

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(48) ibid., p. 11

(49) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., pp. 37 & 58

(50) ibid., p. 68

(51) The British Metropolis in 1851, op. cit., advertisement.

(52) The Yorkshireman's Guide, op. cit., pp. 19-20

(53) Cunningham, op. cit., p. 33

some confusion when they arrived and they had to spend a few nights at the Gun Tavern near Buckingham Palace. This was crowded and the four men in the party had to share one bedroom. They were naturally much happier when they moved into their proper lodgings. Unfortunately, no information is given about prices in the diary of their visit. (54) American visitors were strongly urged to take lodgings by Horace Greeley, who issued the stern warning, "whatever may be wise at other seasons, never think of stopping at a London hotel this summer unless you happen to own the Bank of England." (55) The streets leading from the Strand to the river were recommended for lodgings of "moderate style and expense".(56) But all over London there were lodgings where a bedroom and the use of a breakfast room could be had for 10s. 6d. a week. (57)

Cheap accommodation was thus available on a wide scale for those who wanted it. William Andrews was a silk weaver who went to the Exhibition after receiving an

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(54) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., pp. 11 & 33

(55) Greeley, op. cit., p. 46

(56) The British Metropolis in 1851, op. cit., p. 3

(57) Cunningham, op. cit., p. 33; The London Conductor, published by John Cassell, London, 1851, pp. 3-4, warned visitors to avoid the City and to stay in the cheaper areas like Islington, the East End or the pretty villages south of the Thames. Costing only 9d. this particular guide seems to have been intended for the tradesman or skilled artisan visitor.

award of £1-10s. from the Coventry School of Design. He spent a week in the city, taking lodgings at Battersea. He spent two days in the Crystal Palace and three days visiting the sights of London and stayed six nights in all in lodgings. He may have had money of his own, for he gives no details of his expenditure, but he certainly spent an eventful week in London and he gave no indication that he was heavily out of pocket as a result. (58) He did not describe his lodgings and it is difficult to judge the standards of the available accommodation. The satisfaction of the Tod family has been described. But other visitors further down the social scale did have unfortunate experiences. Two young servant girls came from Thrapstone in Northamptonshire with their elder sister and her young child. They took lodgings in Bidborough Street near St. Pancras, where a fire broke out during the night. The child was dropped from a window to safety, but the mother was injured and the party lost all their possessions. Parish relief had to be arranged for them to return home. (59) Miss Emma Harrison, daughter of a substantial farmer of Norfolk, had an alarming experience of a different sort. She came to London with friends and stayed in a lodging house owned by a Mr. Siers. She woke up one night to find one man in her bed and two others in her room. Her screams alerted the owner and brought the police. The three drunken instruders were members of the Royal Horse Artillery. The leader was given the choice of a £10 fine or four months in prison and his friends the

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(58) Chancellor, op. cit., p. 14

(59) The Leeds Times, 27th September, 1851

choice of £5 or two months. (60) But for most of the visitors the problems would have been much more mundane with noise, dirt and overcrowding high on any list. At least one "silly fellow" did not even get that far. He saved hard to pay for his trip to London and the cost of one night's lodging, but "the attractions of the gin palace proved so great," that he spent all his money without actually visiting the Exhibition. (61)

Any evidence of the actual demand for accommodation can only be gragmentary and circumstantial. The newspapers in areas distant from London gave a clear impression that considerable numbers of people were making the journey, and the distance involved, coupled with the natural desire to make the most of an infrequent occasion, must have made a stay of some days inevitable. A Montrose newspaper asserted in early May that, although few of the townspeople had yet gone south, "many are preparing, and we know some of the working classes that are not to be behind their more opulent neighbours in gratifying a laudable curiosity." (62) Other newspapers at this early stage were more cautious and advised their readers to wait until all the exhibits had arrived. (63) But one of these same newspapers was soon advising the many readers who would be setting out on the "pleasant pilgrimage" that lodgings could easily be obtained very cheaply. (64) Osborne's

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(60) The News of the World, 17th August, 1851

(61) The Leeds Mercury, 23rd August, 1851

(62) The Montrose Standard, 16th May, 1851

(63) The Aberdeen Herald, 10th May, 1851

(64) ibid., 31st May, 1851

Hotel offered rooms for the night at 4s. 6d. and beds at the Drury Lane chop house cost from 1s. to 2s. (65). A rival paper in the same town gave very similar advice. (66) It is very noticeable that the tone of the press comment was based on the belief that members of the working classes would be travelling to London. Other newspapers in the region south of Aberdeen adopted the same tone. One of the Montrose newspapers picked up a story from the Glasgow Examiner, which seemed to indicate that the same attitudes were prevalent in the Glasgow area,

> "many decent men, who were never twenty miles from their own doors, began to be absolutely ashamed of having the question to answer so often in the negative, and to think that a visit is indispensible if one would retain the semblance of respectability. Even douce ministers and elders look sheepish as the everlasting interrogation is kept under their noses, and not a few of them have been by persuasion, chased to the Exhibition." (67)

It is significant that the same attitudes were being expressed in two areas at the very limit of the railway system. As the season progressed a new note crept into the comment. The Montrose Review claimed that "a considerable number of our citizens" had gone to London and this was why the streets were so "dull and lifeless." (68)

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(65) ibid., 7th June, 1851

(66) The Aberdeen Journal, 12th July, 1851

(67) The Montrose Standard, 16th July, 1851

(68) The Montrose Review, 8th August, 1851

Its rival, the Montrose Standard, went further. Shopkeepers were complaining that business had never been so bad and no money was being spent because so many people had gone to London. (69) This same complaint began to be heard in other parts of the country. The Leeds Times welcomed the fact that "all classes of the community have had the opportunities of visiting the metropolis," but it warned that many provincial tradesmen had been badly affected by the flow of people and money to London. (70) Fraser's Magazine agreed that "the shopkeepers are the great losers." (71)

Similar attitudes could be found in other parts of the country. In the early summer the Great Western Railway was taken to task for running only day excursions in addition to the ordinary services. These excursions allowed visitors some nine hours in London, which was described as "absurd" and a typical "specimen of railway meanness." (72) The critics clearly believed that visitors would want to spend more than one day in London. In fairness it should be mentioned that the Great Western did start to run five day excursions later that summer and that decision too encountered criticism. A man describing himself as a servant wrote to The Times complaining that five day excursions were too long. Servants could not afford to spend five days in London and three

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(69) The Montrose Standard, 22nd August, 1851

(70) The Leeds Times, 23rd August, 1851

(71) Fraser's Magazine, Memorabilia of the Exhibition Season, Number 260, August, 1851, p. 125

(72) The Western Times, 7th June, 1851

days would have been better. (73) It is interesting that the writer claimed that servants could afford a three day stay in London.

Another form of evidence should also be considered. It hardly seems likely that those who travelled to London and spent several days there would not have taken advantage of the opportunity to visit some of the other attractions there. Individuals who left accounts of their experiences certainly did so. William Andrews, the Coventry silk weaver, managed to visit the Tower of London, Guildhall, the Thames Tunnel, St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery, the British Museum, the Zoological Gardens and Gravesend. (74) The Tod family from Lasswade near Edinburgh managed to complete a similar programme, and also visited Woolwich and Kew Gardens. (75) The numbers of visitors to Woolwich increased remarkably in the summer of 1851. In July, 1851 there were 17,049 British visitors compared to 2,067 in the same month of the previous year. In the period from May to October there were no less than 155,665 British visitors. (76) The number of foreign visitors also showed a startling increase. The increased number of visitors to the Tower of London caused a peculiar problem. Whenever the number of visitors reached 300, a piquet of 30 men had to be turned out under arms until the numbers subsided. (77)

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(73) The Times, 26th August, 1851

(74) Chancellor, op. cit., p. 14

(75) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., pp. 46, 47, 62-69

(76) Illustrated London News, 25th October, 1851

(77) Thomas Cook, The Excursionist, 19th July, 1851

Cremorne Gardens reported that the number of visitors that season was up by 200,000 on the previous year, and there seems no reason why the permanent population of London should have caused this sudden increase. (78) It is also worth remembering that, although Cremorne was popular with the livelier element of students, clerks and shopmen, it never acquired the fashionable image of Vauxhall and much of its popularity rested with provincial visitors. (79)

Fragments of this kind would seem to indicate that people did spend several days in London and did visit attractions other than the Exhibition. At first the demand for accommodation appears to have been much lighter than expected. People were frightened off by the stories of excessive prices and overcrowding. They either stayed away or paid only brief visits. (80) Mayhew's Sandboys family sleeping in hammocks and drawers seems to have had no counterpart in reality. (81) Newspapers were able to report that, although there had been a great influx of people seeking accommodation, preparations had been more than adequate, "families have gone down to watering places in hopes of making fortunes by letting their town-houses, hotel keepers have fitted up additional dormitories, lodging house keepers have multiplied their beds, and multi-

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(78) Illustrated London News, 25th October, 1851

(79) W. Wroth, Cremorne and the Later London Gardens, London, 1907, p. 11

(80) Greeley, op. cit., p. 124

(81) Mayhew, op. cit., p. 59

tudes of empty houses are to be seen in every district." (82) The Illustrated London News confirmed this by reporting that the demand for accommodation had been lighter than expected and prices were falling as a result. (83) It seems likely that this pattern continued for the rest of the summer. There was a demand for accommodation but the supply of lodgings of all kinds from expensive hotels to beds provided by friends and relatives was very considerable and there is no evidence that there was any shortage. The absence of press comment would seem to indicate that the expected crisis never materialised. In view of the closeness with which all events connected with the Exhibition were followed by the press, such a story would not have been missed.

No contemporary statistician seems to have made any attempt at a methodical calculation of the number of visitors and the number of nights they spent in London. We are left with an impression based on fragments of evidence. It is here that the 'human interest' stories in the newspapers are important for the deductions that can be made from them. It is hardly significant that a Barnsley cordwainer returned from London to find that his wife had eloped with the lodger and most of his possessions, but it is interesting that a cordwainer had been able to spend four days in London. (84) It is hardly significant that a cabinet maker from Nottingham was married in London, but

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(82) The Montrose Standard, 16th May, 1851

(83) Illustrated London News, 31st May, 1851

(84) The Leeds Intelligencer, 16th August, 1851

it is interesting that a cabinet maker, who was just setting up a business and a home in Liverpool, was able to make ten daily visits to the Exhibition from Nottingham, and then mark the occasion by being married in London. (85) It is hardly significant that two servant girls lost all their possessions in a lodging house fire, but it is interesting that two servant girls from Thrapstone were able to afford lodgings in London. It is interesting that a warehouseman like Louis Hayes, (86) a draper's assistant like William Whiteley, (87) and a Coventry weaver like Joseph Gutteridge (88) were all able to spend several days in London. Clearly, we cannot assume from a single example that every cordwainer, weaver, servant and cabinet maker was in a position to spend several days on holiday in London. But many such examples have survived in newspapers, diaries and memoirs and it does seem reasonable to assume that the cases recorded in this way are only one part of a greater whole. It would be foolish to assume on the basis of one example that every cordwainer went to the Exhibition; it is equally hard to believe that only one cordwainer went, and out of the mass of visitors, he came to light because of a domestic scandal. The range of occupations revealed in these diaries and reports is remarkably wide and they do reveal that it was not only

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(85) J. B. Goodman, The Memoirs of James Hopkinson, Victorian Cabinet Maker, London, 1968, p. 94

(86) Hayes, op. cit., p. 215

(87) Lambert, op. cit., p. 18

(88) Chancellor, op. cit., p. 142

members of the middle classes who were financially able to spend several days in London. Many small tradesmen and skilled artisans from all parts of the country were able to do the same.

Chapter 11

Reasons for the Visits.

One of the most fundamental questions that must be asked about the Great Exhibition is why such a large number of people decided to visit it. In the case of Londoners, the reasons are easy to understand. The Exhibition was there and no great effort was required to go to Hyde Park and spend one shilling. In an age when the opportunities for recreation and entertainment were limited, an unusual event would have tempted people to travel a short distance. The decision to travel from Exeter or Leeds or Glasgow must have required a much more positive effort of will.

There appear to have been four main reasons why this effort was made by so many people, leaving aside those who were sent by their employers or by some effort of charity. Some were attracted by the press publicity, some were there to improve their educational standards, some were there for simple pleasure and some were impelled by a snobbish desire not to miss a great social occasion. These motives were not mutually exclusive and most of the visitors were probably influenced by a mixture of some, or all, of these.

The influence of the newspapers, both national and local, was crucial in bringing visitors to London and Londoners to Hyde Park. A study of almost any newspaper will show that well before the Exhibition opened, it had received considerable publicity. This built up to a vast extent at the time of the opening in May and continued at a very high level in the subsequent months. In areas of the country where the Protectionist influence was strong, the Exhibition was disliked as the symbol of Free Trade.

Liverpool was affected by the Derby family which did not share the enthusiasm of Disraeli. (1) Kent was dominated by Lord Stanhope, with only Dover attracted by the hope of increased cross-channel traffic. (2) In some cases this hostility, expressed by Protectionist newspapers, remained implacable throughout the Exhibition. The Galloway Advertiser & Wigtownshire Free Press was owned by the Protectionist, Lord Stair. Its coverage was mainly characterised by indifference and hostility. Only the opening ceremonies were favourably described, and this was probably copied from a national paper, for the editor passed the sentence, "the Great Exhibition is an admirable sequel to our Free Trade policy," which must have been a surprise to regular readers. (3) The closing ceremonies saw the paper return to a more normal frame of mind with the comment that "the contents will be scattered and the building removed, and perhaps it is right it should be so." (4) Other Protectionist newspapers, however, were less implacable and underwent a notable change of heart as time went on. In early September 1850 the Montrose Standard admitted that the Exhibition could not "fail to be interesting and astonishing," but concluded more sourly that "we cannot fancy that it will do much harm, nor do we imagine it will work any great amount of good." (5) But

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(1) Sidney, op. cit., p. 164; T. Ellison, Gleanings and Reminiscences, Liverpool, 1905, p. 309

(2) ffrench, op. cit., p. 65

(3) The Galloway Advertiser & Wigtownshire Free Press, 15th May, 1851

(4) ibid., 9th October, 1851

(5) The Montrose Standard, 6th September, 1851

later the same month Paxton's design for the Crystal Palace was copied from the Illustrated London News and the design was compared to a great temple of religion. (6) This illustration, in a Scottish newspaper usually devoid of such visual attractions, must have roused considerable interest. The paper predicted, correctly as it turned out, that "thousands will in all probability see the Exhibition, who, but for it, would have rusticated their whole lives in the provinces, without indulging even in a dream of visiting the modern Babylon." (7) The paper was to spend the next few months on its primary interests, namely Protectionism, Papal aggression and the evils of the Kaffir War, but the space devoted to the Exhibition grew steadily. Paxton's design had marked a turning point. Weekly reports soon became a regular feature and considerable information was provided about travel to London both by rail and by steamship. (8) The description of the opening ceremony was the excuse for a lengthy editorial on Britain's commercial and spiritual greatness, and this spirit of pride was maintained for the rest of the summer. The fact that the Exhibition had made a profit was "peculiarly gratifying to a nation of merchants, such as we are," (9) a comment which must have puzzled its regular readers, and in conclusion, the paper decided that "all classes have increased their stock of

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(6) ibid., 20th September, 1851

(7) ibid., 11th April, 9th May, 23rd July, 1851

(8) ibid., 10th October, 1851

(9) ibid., 31st October, 1851

knowledge, enlarged the sphere of their enjoyments, cultivated new and instructive relations, exercised their national hospitality, confirmed their loyalty, and this without increasing our bills of mortality, or adding to our calenders of crime." (10) The earlier feeling that it would not do much good had changed dramatically. For most of the Protectionist newspapers this appears to have been a typical experience. Even those which remained sceptical continued to give it publicity.

Some of this press comment was deliberately stimulated by the Exhibition Commissioners. The techniques of 'public relations' were already surprisingly well understood. In April 1851 many editors of local newspapers were invited to London for a preview of the Exhibition and they were feted at a banquet given by the Lord Mayor. One such was Thomas Latimer of the Western Times in Exeter. (11) He was greatly impressed by what he saw. As an anti-clerical radical, he disliked the pomp of the formal banquet, but he liked the freedom of a Sunday in London compared with Exeter. In his case, of course, this preview was unnecessary, if it were designed to win new friends. Latimer was already an enthusiastic supporter of the Exhibition and was heavily involved in the formation and running of the Exeter subscription association. Other editors, however, may well have been influenced by this preferential treatment.

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(10) ibid., 31st October, 1851

(11) R. S. Lambert, The Cobbett of the West, London, 1939, pp. 177-8

Most contemporary observers were convinced that this publicity had been effective. Dr. Mantell believed that most of the visitors were incapable of appreciating the beauty and the value of what they had seen, and that they had been roused up to go by the newspaper publicity. (12) John Tod, the Edinburgh engineer, wrote in his diary that the curiosity of his family had been raised to fever pitch by the publicity. (13) Louis Hayes from Manchester made a revealing comment when he described how he fought through the October crowds to see the Koh-I-Nor. He was disappointed at what appeared to be little more than a piece of glass or crystal, but he felt that he could not face returning home and having to admit that he had not seen it. (14)

In fiction too the heroes were heavily influenced by the press. The Sandboys family were practically forced to go to London, because they could not survive living alone in their deserted village and Mayhew argues quite strongly that the curiosity of their neighbours had been roused by the publicity. (15) Barnabas Blandydash, another fictional hero, was stimulated into a visit by reading a borrowed copy of the News of the World. He and his wife decided to go on a five shilling day, "when it was highly respectable," but since Blandydash had one wooden leg and did not want to risk another by travelling

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(12) Curwen, op. cit., p. 274

(13) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., p. 6

(14) Hayes, op. cit., p. 216

(15) Mayhew, op. cit., Chapter 2.

by rail, they had to make their way to London by pony and trap. (16)

It is clear, from the examples both of fact and fiction, that the influence of the newspapers had been crucial. In the last weeks of 1850 the design of the Crystal Palace and the concept of the Exhibition captured the imagination of the press, and from there it was a short step to capture the imagination of the public. The whole episode is a remarkable example of the power of the press before the full emergence of national newspapers on a significant scale.

A second important factor in bringing visitors to the Exhibition was the fact that, while specialised exhibitions were not new, the scale and international scope of the Great Exhibition certainly was. The first Royal Academy Exhibition had taken place in 1769 and groups of artists had already held public exhibitions some nine years earlier. (17) Dr. Birbeck and others connected with the Mechanics' Institutes had begun an exhibition of manufactured goods in London in 1825 and this example had been followed in the provinces. (18) In 1837 an art exhibition was held in the Manchester Mechanics Institute. This was so popular that it was repeated the following year and the profits used to pay off a mortgage of £8,000. (19) Some

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(16) 'Uncle Joseph,' The Trip to the Great Exhibition of Barnabas Blandydash and Family, London, 1851, p. 9

(17) K. W. Luckhurst, The Story of Exhibitions, London, 1951, p. 31

(18) ibid., p. 81

(19) P. Berlyn, The Origin, History, Progress and Prospects of the Great Industrial Exhibition, London, 1851, p.14

50,000 people attended the first exhibition and some 100,000 attended the second. (20) In 1839 an exhibition of art and manufactured goods in Leeds made a profit of £1,630. There were 183,913 admissions and it was estimated that there were some 100,000 actual visitors. (21) In Liverpool in 1840 a similar exhibition also attracted some 100,000 visitors and, when this was repeated in 1842, some 97,000 visitors brought in a profit of £4,000. (22) Children from charity schools, soldiers and policemen were admitted free, an example that was not followed in 1851. In the 1840's similar exhibitions were held in Derby, Newcastle and Devonport. The Birmingham Exhibition at Bingley House in 1849 attracted some 100,000 visitors, including Prince Albert. (23) There was thus in the decade before 1851 a firm tradition of attending exhibitions of art and manufactured goods, particularly in the cities of the north, where the Mechanics Institutes were well attended. In 1851 these Institutes were in a flourishing condition. J. W. Hudson gave the following figures:

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(20) J. Timbs, The Year-Book of Facts, Supplementary Volume, London, 1851, p. 11

(21) ibid., p. 11

(22) J. W. Hudson, The History of Adult Education, London, 1851, p. 104

(23) Timbs, op. cit., pp. 12 & 15

	Number of Institutes	Number of Members	Numbers in Evening Classes
Wales	12	7,472	280
Scotland	55	12,554	1,638
Ireland	25	4,005	182
England	610	102,050	16,020
TOTAL	702	126,081	18,120 (24)

There was a heavy concentration of Institutes in the West Riding, South East Lancashire and the adjoining corner of North-East Cheshire. Throughout the 1840's the numbers of the Yorkshire Institutes especially increased steadily, reaching 151 by 1850. (25) The clerks, tradesmen and skilled artisans were the main supporters of the Institutes by 1851 and their activities met with the full approval of the middle classes, for they helped to mould working class society into a middle class image. (26) The Aberdeen Mechanics Institute awarded 19 prizes at the end of the 1850/1 term and all went to clerks, shop workers and millwrights, with one going to a blacksmith. None of the prize winners could really be described as an unskilled worker. (27) The same social pattern of attendance was repeated across the country. (28) The very same trades-

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(24) Hudson, op. cit., p. vi

(25) T. Kelly, George Birkbeck, Pioneer of Adult Education, Liverpool, 1957, p. 259

(26) J. F. C. Harrison, Learning and Living, 1790-1960, London, 1961, p. 213; M. Tylecote, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851, Manchester University Press, 1952, p. 259

(27) The North of Scotland Gazette, 8th April, 1851

(28) Tylecote, op. cit., p. 258

men and skilled workers were the main supporters of the subscription associations and their interest in the Exhibition may well have been roused by lectures and discussions held in the Institutes. They believed in self-improvement and they saw the Exhibition as an educational experience as well as a noble ideal. A Country weaver, Joseph Gutteridge, expressed this thought in his diary,

> "the treasures it contained interested me most. They surpassed anything previously conceived or read about, and they kept my mind in a state of continual excitement for some time. Amongst other things, I realised how little I knew of botany, for although possessed of a fair knowledge of British plants, I was lamentably deficient in a knowledge of the vegetable products of other countries." (29)

Gutteridge's desire for self-improvement did not end in 1851, for in 1867 he was sent by the Coventry Society of Arts to visit the Paris Exhibition. There were many like Gutteridge in the industrial cities of the North and the Midlands, where most of the Institutes were situated, and this goes some way towards explaining why the Exhibition was so popular in areas like Leeds. It must also be remembered that trade was flourishing in 1851. By 1850, for example, the number of people with deposits in the savings banks was 1,112,999 and their deposits had reached

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(29) Chancellor, op. cit., p. 142

nearly £30 million. (30) In Sheffield workers in regular employment were "reasonably well provided with the basic items of furniture" and a "sober and respectable working-man" could easily save £10 to £15 before marriage. (31) In Aberdeen trade was so prosperous that "the usual winter soup-kitchen, which had been established some years ago to relieve the necessities of the poor, had last winter been discontinued as unnecessary." (32) Institute members had not only the desire to improve themselves, many of them thus did have the money to satisfy this desire by visiting the Exhibition.

Social pressures also played a considerable part, particularly among the upper and middle classes. The opening ceremony on 1st May attracted vast crowds. The declaration of a public holiday attracted the working classes of London, and the desire to take part, even if only as spectators, in a fashionable social occasion attracted the middle and upper classes. Sir Henry Bessemer did attend the ceremony in the Crystal Palace. He lived in Highgate, only two miles from the Palace and he left home at 8.00. a.m. to be in good time for the opening at 11.00. a.m. But the crowd of carriages in Hyde Park was so great that the police were helpless and he had

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(30) R. M. Hartwell, Economic History Review, 'The Rising Standard of Living in England, 1800-1850,' second series, Volume XIII, Number 3, April, 1961, p. 404

(31) S. Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield, Liverpool, 1959, pp. 24 & 28

(32) Parliamentary Papers, Report of Inspectors of Factories, District of Scotland, Volume XXIII, April, 1851

to leave his carriage and push through the crowds. He arrived only just in time. (33) Mrs. Ward, wife of the artist Edward Ward, was in the streets much earlier than Sir Henry and she left a memorable description of "people of good standing" sleeping in their carriages and being served breakfast on the pavement by their footmen so that they would be in a good viewing position. (34) On that day 1,050 state carriages, 1,500 hacks and cabs, 800 broughams, 600 post carriages, 300 clarences and 300 other carriages passed through the gates of Hyde Park in addition to the 8 carriages which made up the royal procession. (35) This gives a good indication of the social standing of the visitors on that first day. The closing ceremony attracted similar interest. Marianne Thornton, an elderly survivor of the Clapham sect, was anxious to attend and hoped that a friend, Sir Robert Inglis, would be able to arrange it, since Sir Robert was a patron of the school once attended by Joseph Paxton. (36)

Even between these two great occasions the same feeling of taking part in a fashionable social display was important. The excursionists from the provinces came early in the morning. Many arrived on the night trains, but whenever their arrival, they would have had no wish to waste time. By early afternoon they were exhausted and starting to leave. It was then that fashionable London society arrived to walk

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(33) Sir Henry Bessemer, An Autobiography, London, 1905, pp. 125-6

(34) Ward, op. cit., p. 62

(35) Clunn, op. cit., p. 320

(36) E. M. Forster, Marianne Thornton, London, 1956, p. 172

in the main aisles, to be seen rather than to see. (37) Horace Greeley was convinced that, for this section of society, the example of the Queen was crucial. Her regular visits persuaded the "aristocratic and fashionable classes" to do the same, "no American who has not been in Europe can conceive the extent of Royal influence in this direction. What the Queen does, everyone who aspires to social consideration makes haste to imitate if possible." (38) Greeley believed that the Queen was very well aware of this and she was doing her best to make the Exhibition a success for the sake of her country and her husband; and Greeley admired her for doing it.

This idea that attendance was a social necessity influenced the provincial middle classes as well as fashionable London. Provincial newspapers began to speak of a visit to London as a "social necessity." (39) By the end of the season this atmosphere had turned the attendance figures into a subject for intense speculation and heavy gambling,

> "the hourly returns of the numbers formed, during the day, the subject of intense interest; betting was carried on to an enormous extent, and we are informed that upwards of £100,000 was entered in various books as to the result... The services of the electric telegraph were in constant requisition throughout the day." (40)

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(37) Illustrated London News, 28th June, 1851

(38) Greeley, op. cit., pp. 71-2

(39) The Montrose Standard, 16th July, 1851

(40) The Morning Chronicle, 7th October, 1851

But for most people, however, the motive was simpler. Christopher Hobhouse described the Exhibition as "just a glorious show" and as such, of no importance. (41) But in an age when the bulk of the population were not far above subsistence level and the opportunities for family entertainment were very limited, a huge national show set in a palace of glass had immense powers of attraction. Mrs. Ward wrote of the people coming "with light hearts to make holiday". (42) and the publisher, Charles Knight was quite emphatic,

> "no doubt many thoughtful artisans and commercial men, of all countries, were here for improvement or for profit; but by far the greater number of visitors came for their enjoyment. The opportunities for the pleasure-seekers were such as had never before been within their reach." (43)

The Illustrated London News found it worth noting that the consumption of both wines and spirits fell during the Exhibition months. In the first nine months of 1850 wine consumption was 5,063,819 gallons and in the first nine months of 1851, it fell by 52,701 gallons to 5,011,117 gallons. (44) In the same period the consumption of rum, brandy and gin fell from 3,521,938 gallons

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(41) C. Hobhouse, 1851 and the Crystal Palace, London, 1937, p. 151

(42) Ward, op. cit., p. 65

(43) C. Knight, Passages of a Working Life, Volume III, London, 1865, p. 123

(44) Illustrated London News, 22nd November, 1851

to 3,449,089 gallons, a fall of 72,849. (45) This fall was most marked during the months when the Exhibition was actually open. Since drinking was one of the few sources of pleasure open to the working man, as the advocates of public parks, libraries etc. so rightly argued, (46) it does seem reasonable to assume that the money saved in this way was spent on the Exhibition as an alternative source of pleasure.

It thus seems clear that there were several reasons why so many people came to visit the Exhibition. Most of them were influenced by a mixture of motives, but the influence of the newspaper publicity and the desire to enjoy a glorious show would appear to have been paramount.

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(45) ibid., 15th November, 1851

(46) J. F. C. Harrison, The Early Victorians, 1832-51, London, 1973, p. 98

Chapter 12

Foreign Visitors.

The Exhibition seems to have aroused considerable interest in many different parts of the world. In Britain there were predictions that very large numbers of foreigners would attend. Henry Mayhew, in the introduction to his comic novel about the Sandboys family, described the preparations being made by Hottentots, Cingalese, Zoolu and many more besides. (1) But, more seriously, the bulk of the visitors were expected to come from France and the other countries of Western Europe. Opponents of the Exhibition argued that London would be filled with anarchists and socialists plotting revolution. Other predictions were equally false. One railway newspaper reported that half a million members of the French National Guard would arrive on organised excursions. (2) and, just before the Exhibition actually opened, a provincial newspaper claimed that nearly quarter of a million passports had been issued by the French government. (3) The writers must have been confused by the recurrent invasion scares.

The princes and statesmen of Europe certainly were cautious about the Exhibition and the disasters it might cause. Not even the Queen's uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, was prepared to risk the dangers predicted for the opening ceremony; and the King of Hanover, the Queen's

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(1) Mayhew, op. cit., Introduction.

(2) The Railway Record, 31st May, 1851

(3) The North of Scotland Gazette, 29th April, 1851

oldest uncle, was even actively trying to persuade his fellow monarchs not to attend. (4) Only the Crown Prince of Prussia, Frederick William, and his family took the risk, and then only after Prince Albert had written a most sarcastic letter to Berlin promising only that they would receive the same protection as Victoria and himself. (5) Later that summer, after experience had shown it to be safe, Leopold did come over and he accompanied Victoria on several of her visits during June. But no other head of state paid a visit. Several French ministers did attend, including M. Leon Faucher, Minister of the Interior, and M. Baroche, Minister of Justice. (6) Napoleon Bonaparte, son of Jerome and nephew of the first Emperor, visited the Exhibition just before it closed, but his cousin Louis Napoleon, already President of France and soon to be Emperor, did not. (7)

Foreigners of less rank were more courageous. With the notable exception of the Russian ambassador, Baron de Brunnow, the Diplomatic Corps did attend the opening ceremony. There was even what appeared to be an ambassador from the Empire of China, who was treated with the greatest consideration. He Sing, however, turned out to be the owner of a junk from Hong Kong who was making money showing visitors around his exotic craft. Queen Victoria

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(4) Bird, op. cit., pp. 27 & 102

(5) R. Fulford, The Prince Consort, London, 1949, p. 221

(6) The Morning Chronicle, 18th August and 23rd August, 1851

(7) ibid., 10th October, 1851

noticed that there were many French visitors at the opening ceremony who greeted with with cries of 'Vive la Reine.' (8) Other notable visitors came in an official capacity. Hector Berlioz was a juror for the musical instruments. (9) and the American, Horace Greeley was there both as juror and journalist. (10) Jules Janin and Michel Chevalier, two distinguished French writers, covered the Opening on behalf of the Journal des Debats. (11)

But the preparations which had been made were designed to provide for much more than a handful of statesmen and journalists. Businessmen of many kinds were convinced that there would be a considerable market for their services. The activities of the railway and steamship companies have already been described. (12) The publishers of newspapers and guide books were quick to produce special editions in French and German. The London Illustrated News produced special editions in both French and German and the Morning Chronicle published regular notes on the Exhibition in the same languages. Even the police appear to have made a special effort and, despite the inevitable jokes, there was admiration for the way that ordinary policemen had picked up a working knowledge of French and German. (13)

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(8) Gibbs-Smith, op. cit., p. 17

(9) H. M. Dunstan, The Life and Letters of Berlioz, Volume 1, London, 1882, p. 199

(10) Greeley, op. cit., p. 32

(11) ffrench, op. cit., p. 171

(12) Above, Chapter 5

(13) Illustrated London News, 31st May, 1851

A large number of guide books were published for the foreign visitors and these give an interesting indication of the range of visitors who were expected. The most comprehensive of these is The British Metropolis in 1851, which was published by Arthur Hall, Virtue & Company. Like most of these guides, it gives information about current exchange rates and covers the currencies of America, Austria, Denmark & Norway, the East Indies, China, France, Belgium, Spain, Hamburgh, Russia & Muscovy, Sweden, Genoa, Holland, Prussia, Venice, Leghorn and Portugal. (14) A similar, but smaller and less useful volume, The Guide of Guides, was written in both English and French. It contained a comparable currency guide, but ignored China, Russia, Hamburgh, Genoa, Holland, Venice and Leghorn and instead included Mexico, Peru, Chile, Saxony, Hanover, Rome, Sardinia, Tuscanny and Sicily. (15) The net was certainly widely cast. It is of course impossible to estimate how widely these books were circulated and read, but they must have had some effect. John Delane, the editor of The Times, spent the summer months touring Germany and Austria and was intrigued to find in Heilbronn, "this out-of-the-way place," a book of London cab fares and a German guide to the Exhibition. (16)

Preparations in other areas also went ahead. A

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(14) Anon., The British Metropolis in 1851, London, 1851, p. 6

(15) Anon., The Guide of Guides for Strangers and Foreigners in London in 1851, London, 1851, pp. 45-7

(16) A. I. Dasent, John Thadeus Delane, Life and Correspondence, London, 1908, Volume I, p. 115

register of accommodation especially for foreign visitors was opened in Mark Lane by a Mr. Henry Bennett. He estimated that some 3,000 visitors per week would be requiring accommodation. (17) A few weeks later it was reported in the press that foreigners were arriving to rent houses. The rent was paid in advance by the well-dressed and apparently respectable tenant, who then made a profit by renting the rooms to vast numbers of less well-dressed and less respectable fellow nationals. (18) Despite the reputation of the newspaper concerned, this story does not ring true.

Some of the most active preparations were made by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The Bishop of London persuaded the Society to allocate £500 for the provision of additional services, tracts and reading rooms. (19) By April 1851 some 33 clergymen from Britain, France and Germany had offered their services. Arrangements had been made for special services at St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. There were legal problems, however, since all services in Anglican churches had to be held in English and arrangements had to be made for services in French and German to be held in proprietory chapels. (20) In addition to the money allocated by the Society, over £700 was raised by private donation and this was spent on extra services, the provision of a reading room at St. Pancras and the

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(17) The Journal of the Exhibition, op. cit., 8th March, 1851

(18) Illustrated London News, 12th April, 1851

(19) S.P.C.K., Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for 1852, 'Report of the Additional Services Committee to the Bishop of London,' p. 80

(20) ibid., p. 79

distribution of tracts. (21) Some of the literature thus provided went to the Ranelagh Mechanics Home and some was distributed at Richmond. (22) Among the recipients of this literature, although hardly foreigners, was the Tod family from Edinburgh. While visiting Richmond by paddle steamer, they were surprised and impressed to be given these tracts while actually on the steamer. (23) The effects of all this are difficult to guage, but the St. Pancras reading room seems to have been well frequented by foreign visitors and the regular Tuesday evening services at St. Martin-in-the-Fields were well attended with numbers "occasionally reaching about a thousand in number." (24) Perhaps the main beneficiaries of all this activity were those French and Germans who were normally resident in London and were able to enjoy the pleasure of worship in their own languages.

There is no evidence, despite the wide range of information provided by the guide books, that vast numbers of Russians, Peruvians or East Indiamen arrived in London, but a considerable number of visitors from distant parts of the world did find their way to the Crystal Palace, where they aroused the attention of the press and the public. There were four Iroquois Indian chiefs, who were described as being greatly depressed by what they saw. (25)

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(21) ibid., p. 81

(22) ibid., p. 81

(23) Diary of John Tod, op. cit., p. 68

(24) Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for 1852, p. 81

(25) The Morning Chronicle, 16th August, 1851

There was a seven-foot high giantess from Lapland, who was handsome and well proportioned despite her great size. (26) There were Parsee merchants from Bombay (27) and Turkish ladies in trousers. (28) The explorer, Captain O'Manney, brought an 'Esquimaux,' Erasmus York, from Baffin Bay. (29) His fate was probably happier than that of some of the other visitors, for he went on to St. Augustine's College to train as a missionary. (30) An Algerian family who came to visit was persuaded to stay as exhibits at the Vauxhall Gardens. (31) Another Arab family achieved fame in another way. The sheik with a train of four boys and three women in rather dirty linen appeared to speak no English and appeared to have no money. To avoid a scene, the group was allowed in free, which must have been a unique distinction. (32) But, perhaps most interest was reserved for a Chinese family. The women had to be taken round the Exhibition in bath chairs for they were unable to walk with their bound feet.(33)

There were also larger, organised groups with a more serious purpose than pleasure. The King of Sweden arranged for some 70 workmen to spend two weeks studying the exhibits

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(26) ibid., 19th August, 1851

(27) Illustrated London News, 30th August, 1851

(28) ibid., 6th September, 1851

(29) The Times, 11th October, 1851

(30) Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for 1852, General Meeting of 13th January, 1852, p. 263

(31) Illustrated London News, 12th July, 1851

(32) The Leeds Times, 4th October, 1851

(33) Illustrated London News, 30th August, 1851

to see what skills they could bring back. (34) The Chamber of Commerce in Prague had the same idea at almost the same time and subscribed some £250 to send skilled artisans. (35) Many French towns followed this example. Some 90 workers were sent from Paris and another 130 from towns like Lyons, Amiens, Toulouse, Rheims and Strasbourg by the respective Chambers of Commerce. The French government also arranged for a dozen skilled workers to be sent from the state factories at Sevres and Gobelins. (36) In addition the pupils of the Naval College at Brest were sent on a corvette to spend six days in London. (37) The King of Sardinia sent 83 skilled workmen at his own expense to study the exhibits, to see the exhibits that they themselves had produced, and to visit the main industrial towns. (38)

Clearly a wide variety of foreign visitors did attend. But isolated examples of Turkish ladies in trousers and Spanish ladies in mantillas are hardly a useful guide to numbers. In an age before mass travel any foreigner had some rarity value, and the more distant the country, the

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(34) ibid., 5th July, 1851

(35) The Leeds Mercury, 5th July, 1851

(36) The Times, 6th August, 1851; The Leeds Intelligencer, 9th August, 1851; The North of Scotland Gazette, 26th August, 1851. The extent to which these stories were copied from the London papers is remarkable.

(37) Illustrated London News, 30th August, 1851

(38) The Illustrated Exhibitor, bound edition published by John Cassell, 20th September, 1851.

more noteworthy the visitor. It is notable, for example, that many of the individual cases mentioned above were picked up and repeated in the pages of the provincial press. (39) Their presence and their behaviour was a subject of considerable interest, not only at the Exhibition but at the other attractions of the capital. Thomas Cook claimed that the most popular visiting place, apart from the Exhibition itself, was the Tower of London, where hundreds were to be found every day inspecting the armoury and the jewel room. (40) There was great amusement when it was discovered that whenever the number of visitors to the Tower reached 300, the gates had to be closed and a piquet of 30 men turned out under arms until the numbers had subsided. (41) All the other obvious sights of London received their due share of attention, but some of the most popular attractions might seem less obvious to the modern visitor. The Thames tunnel at Rotherhithe was one of the main attractions for French visitors (42) and for nearly all nationalities the Arsenal and dockyards at Woolwich had great appeal. In 1850 there had been some 2,000 visitors in each of the summer months, and only a handful of these were foreigners; but in 1851 the picture was very different.

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(39) The Chinese family mentioned above were described in many of the local newspapers, see, for example, The Montrose Review, 22nd August, 1851

(40) The Exhibition Herald, published by Thomas Cook, 19th July, 1851

(41) Illustrated London News, 12th July, 1851

(42) ibid., 8th November, 1851

Visitors to Woolwich, May to October 1851

Month	Foreign Visitors	Total Visitors
May	199	2,415
June	885	6,147
July	2,231	17,049
August	2,414	54,443
September	3,133	50,989
October	894	24,622 (43)

Here, clearly, was a major attraction for British visitors as well as foreigners. One newspaper gave a breakdown of the figures for the week ending 19th July 1851. In that particular week there were 546 foreign visitors. France with 126 was not, as might have been expected, the most heavily represented. Prussia led with 154 and Belgium was third with 87, Saxony fourth with 44 and Austria fifth with 28. Almost every other European country was represented except Portugal, but the only representatives from outside Europe were six visitors from the United States. (44)

Few of the visitors seem to have travelled far from London. The main attractions outside the capital were Royal Ascot and Windsor Castle. The Annual Register commented on the number of foreign visitors at the June meeting, where the presence of the Queen was the major attraction. (45) Windsor Castle was also popular. In July

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(43) ibid., 26th July, 1851

(44) ibid., 26th July, 1851

(45) The Annual Register, June, 1851

between 1,500 and 1,800 visitors, most of them foreigners, were passing through the State apartments each day. (46) Some of the more adventurous did go further afield. A number of Americans did go on walking tours in Perthshire around Athol and Rannock, but from the lack of press comment, it is doubtful if the numbers were substantial. (47)

The majority of the visitors appear to have come through the Channel ports, using the steadily expanding paddle steamer services and then the railway network to London. The steamer services were extensive. In the summer of 1850 there were some 28 voyages per week between Dover and Calais with an average of 100 passengers per trip. (48) The journey from Paris to London was advertised as taking 11 hours, although in practice delays were fairly common and the time could be considerably longer. Horace Greeley was understandably annoyed to arrive four hours late in Paris and still have to face the customs officials. (49) He returned by the longer route via Rouen, Dieppe and Newhaven. Because of the longer sea crossing, this journey took 26 hours. Greeley thought the ship was very small by comparison with the river steamers of America, yet there were some 200 passengers. (50) In the summer of 1851 there were 14 steam boats operating between Ostend,

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(46) The North of Scotland Gazette, 22nd July, 1851

(47) The Brechin Advertiser, 27th May, 1851

(48) J. Bavington-Jones, The Annals of Dover, Dover, 1916, p. 157

(49) Greeley, op. cit., p. 120

(50) ibid., p. 273

Calais and Dover and about 2,000 passengers a week were being landed at Dover during the Exhibition months. (51) Facilities were thus available to transport a considerable body of people.

How far were those facilities used by visitors to the Exhibition. In mid-October The Economist reported that, "according to the returns obtained by the Commissioners of the passengers brought by different packets, the number has not exceeded 70,000. That falls far below the general expectation and the popular estimate of the actual number." (52) No details were given of how this figure was reached and it certainly does appear lower than had been expected.

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(51) Albert de Burbure de Wesembeek, The Centenary of the Ostend-Dover Line, 1846-1946, Belgian Marine Department, 1946, p. 76

(52) The Economist, 18th October, 1851, p. 1146

Passengers Through the Major Channel Ports: 1845-1855

Year	Boulogne	Calais	Dieppe	Ostend	TOTAL
1845	70,709	15,664	11,761	28,744	126,878
1846	72,150	18,463	13,151	35,748	139,512
1847	78,273	16,637	4,905	35,581	135,396
1848*	69,909	17,956	957	23,951	112,773
1849**	64,997	36,376	2,751	22,661	126,785
1850	86,411	54,030	2,096	26,359	168,896
1851	108,544	95,606	25,515	41,151	270,816
1852	87,544	56,466	13,025	21,039	178,350
1853	95,236	65,594	16,208	21,184	198,222
1854	99,181	64,687	18,613	21,039	203,520
1855***	136,321	80,393	39,311	17,988	274,023 (53)

These figures show very clearly the great influence of the Exhibition, indicating an unusual addition to traffic of about 100,000 journeys: an additional 50,000 visiting Britain in 1851. Since the Channel ports were not the only ones in use, it is clear that The Economist was not far out with its figure of 70,000. (54)

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(53) R. J. Croft, 'The Nature and Growth of Cross-Channel Traffic Through Calais and Boulogne, 1840-1870,' Transport History, Volume 4, 1971, p. 265

(54) At the half-yearly meeting of the South Eastern Railway reported in The Railway Times of 6th March, 1852, it was reported that the continental traffic had been disappointing. Some 317,104 passengers had come in through Antwerp, Ostend, Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne and Le Havre in 1851 of whom 170,966 had travelled in the South Eastern Railway. Several shareholders were not

This figure does not, of course, include visitors from Ireland. At the end of May, it was being reported that the demand in Dublin for English banknotes by prospective visitors was so great that the banks could not meet it. (55) Despite this kind of impressionistic evidence, however, it is doubtful if the total figure exceeded 20,000. From Cork, for example, one of the major Irish ports, there were just over 2,800 passengers for the Exhibition in May June and July.

It would appear likely, therefore, that a figure of about 70,000 Irish and foreign visitors would not be too inaccurate. Further assumptions must then be made to assess the resulting impact on the number of visits to the Exhibition. It is almost inconceivable that a visitor coming from a foreign country would have been content with

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impressed and complained that the Brighton and South Western had charged lower fares but had been able to pay higher dividends. It should also be noted that passengers did enter the country through other ports and the figure of 70,000 may be slightly lower. The half-yearly meeting of the Great Western Railway was told, "the continental traffic formed an important item in the increase arising from the Exhibition, the numbers of continental travellers reaching nearly 1,000 per week during this period." The Railway Times, 14th February, 1852

(55) The Leeds Mercury, 31st May, 1851

one visit. Most would have paid many more visits. Some would have seen the sense of taking season tickets, and their visits can then be discounted here, for the total number of visits paid by holders of season tickets is already known. For the rest, a minimum of five visits would be a more reasonable assumption and this would mean that foreign and Irish visitors were responsible for about 350,000 of the visits, only a small proportion of the six million total.

It is doubtful if the social effects of this comparatively small influx were very great. It was claimed by the national newspapers that the habit of travel had been encouraged among the upper classes of France and Germany and that this could only improve their opinions of England and the English. It was also noted that the French press was friendlier and more honest in its reporting. (56) But provincial newspapers and private individuals were probably more honest and realistic with comments that "Frenchmen were there in every variety of grotesque costume and every degree of hirsute ugliness." (57)

Yet, some good may well have been done. John Tod was amazed by the number of French, Dutch and German visitors and the "jobbering" sound of their languages, but a few days later he was enjoying a relaxed conversation with two of the exhibitors, an American "nigger" and a Frenchman. (58) Perhaps familiarity did encourage a more tolerant attitude and a slightly better understanding between strangers.

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(56) The Morning Chronicle, 2nd August, 1851

(57) The Stonehaven Journal, 15th July, 1851

(58) Diary of John Tod, op.cit., pp. 33, 70, 86, & 87

Chapter 13

The Results of the Exhibition

Historians have argued at length about the importance of the Exhibition and the results which flowed from it, (1) but, in this whole discussion, the transport aspects have been strangely neglected. Vast numbers of people travelled to London on the railway system in perfect order. Without the railway the immense movement of population, which made the Exhibition such a success, would not have been possible. The great and sudden addition to the volume of passenger traffic had a considerable effect on the railway system.

The actual attendance figures are worth restating. The table below shows on how many days the various entry fees were chargeable and the number of visits in each category.

Season ticket holders	141 days	773,766
£1 visitors	2	1,042
5 shilling visitors	28	245,389
2 shilling & 6 pence visitors	30	579,579
1 shilling visitors	80	4,439,419
		6,039,195 (2)

(1) C. Hobhouse, op. cit., pp. 149-50. Hobhouse claimed that the Exhibition was a "glorious show" of no significance. Y. ffrench, op. cit., p. 278 and C. H. Gibbs-Smith, op. cit., pp. 33-4, on the other hand both draw attention to the improvements in education and the growth of the educational complex at South Kensington.

(2) C. H. Gibbs-Smith, op. cit., pp. 33-4

There have been various estimates of the actual number of visitors behind these totals of visits. The only indisputable fact is that 25,605 holders of season tickets were responsible for 773,766 visits, (3) an average of 30 visits by each one. There were a number of contemporary estimates. The Times suggested rather vaguely that there might have been "more than three million visitors." (4) A few months later, in the official report on the 1851 census, it was suggested that the Exhibition had "produced a greater and more general movement of the population than has ever before been witnessed, in the times of which there are authentic records." (5) The blandness of the official language is almost enough to obscure the significance of the event. This opinion was based on an estimate that two million people had actually visited the Exhibition. C. R. Fay's more modern estimate, however, is considerably higher; "at a guess four million persons must have paid one or more visits." (6) This figure is probably nearer the mark because it does fit our estimate of four million extra passengers carried by the railway companies in the Exhibition year. (7) The movement of some four million people to and from London in a period of five and a half months, if correct, is a development of immense significance, for it

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(3) ibid., pp. 33-4

(4) The Times, 20th October, 1851

(5) Parliamentary Papers, Report of the 1851 Census, 1852/3, Volume LXXXV, p. XXIV

(6) C. R. Fay, op. cit., p. 73

(7) Above, chapter VI

gives more weight to the comment that this was the largest movement of population ever to have taken place in Britain within such a short period up to that time.

After the periodical strikes and riots which had occurred in the industrial areas of the provinces during the previous three decades, it was hardly surprising that the arrival of working-class visitors on such a large scale was awaited with some apprehension by Londoners. The fears of Colonel Sibthorpe and The Times are well enough known and hindsight makes it easy to ridicule these extreme views; (8) but these fears were widely shared by many other members of the ruling classes. (9) It had, after all, been only three years since the last great Chartist demonstrations in London, the seriousness of which historians are at last coming to appreciate. (10) The Metropolitan Police were stronger and better organised than those in the provinces, but the various attempts on the life of the Queen, in 1840, two in 1842, in 1849 and again in 1850 had failed through the inefficiency of the assassins, most of whom were deranged, rather than being prevented by the efforts of the police. (11)

But these fears proved groundless; there were to be no such problems within the Crystal Palace. One man did become deranged and tried to jump from the gallery but was

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(8) The Times, 25th June, 1851

(9) Lord Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life, London, 1911, Volume 6, p. 280

(10) David J. Goodway, Chartism in London, London University Ph. D. Thesis, 1979

(11) D. Marshall, The Life and Times of Victoria, London, 1972, pp. 170-1

restrained by the police, (12) and an elderly gentleman died after a stroke. (13) But these incidents hardly represented any threat to public order. Even when the building was almost hit by an out-of-control balloon, which could have caused immense damage and even loss of life through flying glass, there was no panic among the crowds inside the building. (14) The only risk to public order came from the enthusiasm which greeted the regular visits of the Duke of Wellington. Few would have dared to predict such orderliness before the Exhibition opened.

Equally feared were the activities of the professional criminals. Only a few years before Edwin Chadwick had suggested that 11,000 people died each year as a result of violent crime (15) and, although this figure was probably inflated for his own political purposes, there can be no doubt that there was a large and dangerous crimi-

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(12) The Leeds Times, 9th August, 1851

(13) The North of Scotland Gazette, 10th October, 1851

(14) The Annual Register, 1851. On 16th June, when there were 63,769 visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Graham, two well-known balloonists, took off from Batty's Hippodrome in Kensington. But the balloon drifted out of control after hitting a flag pole, which tore the silk and allowed the gas to escape, and it came near to hitting the Crystal Palace. Sand ballast was thrown on to the roof and this attracted the attention of the visitors inside. Despite the danger of broken glass showering down, there was no panic. The balloon finally hit a house in Arlington Street and both passengers were severely injured.

(15) K. Chesney, The Victorian Underworld, London, 1970, p. 93

nal underworld in London and that this could well have been augmented by hardened criminals from the provinces. The author of one guidebook warned his readers that:

> "It is computed that in this vast metropolis there are 30,000 people who have no other means of gaining a livelihood but by thieving, begging and sponging, the most extensive part of their nefarious practices being that of picking pockets." (16)

Certainly the threat was taken seriously by the police who made a huge effort in terms of manpower. Some 400 policemen were usually on duty each day, a number which rose to 600 on the first two one-shilling days. The London officers were supported by 24 policemen from the provincial forces and 36 from abroad. (17) But the provincial police were soon returned to their normal duties. (18) Within the five and a half months during which the Exhibition was open only 24 people were arrested, 13 for picking or attempting to pick pockets and 11 for attempting to steal exhibits. (19) The criminal classes had clearly been put off by the massive and well-publicised precautions taken, and for this achievement the police were greatly praised. Lord Palmerston declared that all the foreign visitors he had spoken to were most impressed

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(16) J. Beasland, The London Companion During the Great Exhibition, London, 1851, p. 7

(17) ffrench, op. cit., p. 253

(18) The Leeds Intelligencer, 28th June, 1851

(19) The Times, 30th October, 1851. Of the 24, 3 were discharged, 4 were fined, 16 were imprisoned and 1 was transported.

by the fact that law and order was maintained only by "a few policemen dangling a bit of stick in their hands, very civil, very anxious to help us, to show us our way, and to give us information respecting anything we want to look at." (20) A writer in Fraser's Magazine made exactly the same point;

> "Not a single disturbance, that deserves to be remembered, marred the perfect enjoyment and tranquillity of that memorable scene. The police officers had absolutely less to do than usual.... there were fewer accidents and riots than we experience from a crush at one of the theatres." (21)

The same writer, however went on to make a more perceptive comment by giving the real credit to the visitors themselves:

> "We are wrong, perhaps, in saying that the peace was kept by the constables; it was, in reality, kept by the people themselves, who discharged their function as hosts to the Congress of Industries with a geniality and self-respect that reflect the highest credit on the national character." (22)

This realisation by members of the upper and middle classes of the ability of the working classes to behave in a reasonable and orderly way was among the most important

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(20) Illustrated London News, 27th September, 1851

(21) Fraser's Magazine, number 265, January, 1852, p. 23

(22) ibid., p. 23

results of the Exhibition. Contemporaries were fully aware of what had happened;

> "It will teach the wealthy and the privileged, that there is a mass of inert power and real intelligence in the depths of the community, which may be guided and directed for the general good, but never to be coerced and controlled into subservience to the views of an exclusive and privileged class." (23)

This, not surprisingly, was the conclusion drawn by the editor of one radical newspaper. Others came to the same conclusion without trying to make the same overt political point,

> "The millionaire has invited the Shilling Man to a study of the arts of peace and progress; and the alacrity with which the Shilling Man has responded to the call, the intelligence, the good feeling and the earnestness which he displays, has removed a world of prejudice from the mind of the Millionaire. Wealth in the enjoyment of its respected position, no longer dreads the politics of Industry." (24)

The working class visitors had shown themselves capable of much more than good behaviour on a one day outing. Those who had joined the subscription associations had shown themselves capable of constructive organisation

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(23) The Western Times, 18th October, 1851

(24) News of the World, 24th August, 1851

and the habit of regular saving. In this they were well supported by the upper and middle classes. (25) One example of this is worth repeating. The Norwich Member of Parliament, Sir Samuel Peto, actively supported the Working Men's Association in Norwich and when the subscribers did visit London, he paid for a formal dinner at Woolwich. During his speech at the dinner Peto claimed that it was

> "always a pleasure to him to do all he could to promote the happiness and prosperity of the working men of the city of Norwich. Under Divine Providence, he owed all he possessed in the world to his own exertions and the co-operation of the working classes, and he should ever continue to show his gratitude, by doing all he could to promote the interest of those who had placed him there." (26)

In his reply the secretary of the Association, a weaver named Mr. Lynes, thanked Peto, the Sheriff of Norwich, the Mayor and various individuals who had assisted the group and praised their behaviour as a good example of co-operation between labour and capital. Allowing for the atmosphere, the politician's rhetoric and the need to show gratitude, this episode, and many others like it, was clearly seen as a valuable method of reducing the barriers between the classes and a means of encouraging the respect-

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(25) Above, Chapter 4

(26) Illustrated London News, 12th July, 1851

able sections of the working classes to adopt the habits of sobriety and saving. The fact that these stories were so widely reported in the national and local press is a measure of how significant they were seen to be.

Equally significant, and equally widely reported, were the many stories of workers who were given time off work and financial assistance so that they could visit the Exhibition. Hard-headed employers clearly felt this money well spent if it reduced tension and improved relations in their offices and factories and, by subsidising these visits, they clearly showed that they at least trusted their workers and did not fear riot and disorder. Their trust was fully vindicated by events, but the very fact that such trust existed must have been a surprise to many of the upper and middle classes who had never seen the inside of a factory or a slum.

The effects of the Exhibition traffic on the railway system were equally important. The main line companies invested heavily in new rolling stock to meet the anticipated increase in passenger traffic, (27) although no one could have predicted with any accuracy the extent of the increase which did actually take place. The great surge of traffic produced a furious outbreak of competition and fare-cutting; the rivalries between the companies, already bitter as they fought to establish new routes, grew fiercer, particularly after the Great Northern Company opened its route into London to rival the alliance of the Midland

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(27) Above, Chapter 3

Railway and the London & North Western. With the rolling stock available and needing to be used, the 1850's was a decade characterised by furious battles between companies and a remarkable readiness to tear up agreements and to cut previously agreed fares. (28)

In other respects, however the results for the companies and the passengers were more positive. Excursion traffic, already growing enormously in the late 1840's, was further stimulated. In the eight years after 1851 the London & North Western took advantage of at least one major event per year to provide a large number of excursions. (29) Other companies followed suit and this competition led to lower fares and better travelling conditions. In this area Thomas Cook went from strength to strength. No subsequent exhibition was complete without his excursions. In 1857, for example, the organisers of the Manchester Exhibition were forced to ask him to arrange a series of them in an attempt to save their efforts from failure. The 50,000 visitors whom he delivered did, in fact, rescue it from financial ruin. (30) In the more general field of excursions and holidays his business grew steadily, and this reflected the national growth of excursion traffic.

For the companies the vast traffic had another important result. Captain Huish, in an address to the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1852, described how the London & North Eastern had moved 775,000 passengers on its route

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(28) Gourvish, op. cit., p. 164

(29) ibid., p. 164

(30) Fraser Rae, op. cit., p. 50

into London. He praised the efforts made by the company's employees, but said that the real credit was due to"a liberal use of the telegraph." (31) Before 1851 it had been widely felt that additional tracks would have to be built on existing routes to cope with the steadily expanding traffic. During the Exhibition period the network of lines was overloaded, but the electric telegraph had made it possible to handle this extra volume of traffic with a reasonable standard of safety. This experience, and particularly the success of the London & North Western Railway, removed the need for much unnecessary capital expenditure. Huish was not alone in this view. The engineer, Joseph Locke, made exactly the same point:

> "The question of the expediency of laying down additional lines of rails, on account of the crowded state of the traffic on certain lines, had been set at rest by the experience gained during the Great Exhibition, and by the introduction of the electric telegraph." (32)

The Exhibition was thus an event of considerable significance not only for the huge numbers of visitors who came to London, but also for the future working of the railway system which transported them.

The results of this vast traffic to the Exhibition were thus substantial. It was a magnificent demonstration of the efficiency of the railway network. Through the subscription associations it was a small example of the

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(31) M. Huish, Railway Accidents, 1852, p. 16. Printed version of address to Institute of Civil Engineers.

(32) B. Poole, The Economy of Railways, London, 1852, see article by Joseph Locke, p. 20

capacity of the working classes for self-help and, through the visits organised and paid for by employers, it was an interesting attempt to improve industrial and class relations. Above all, to quote the Registrar General's remark once more, the movement of some four million people was: "a greater and more general movement of population than has ever before been witnessed, in the times of which there are authentic records." (33) Since the most obvious feature of this movement was the atmosphere of order and tranquility in which it took place, thus influencing the attitude of the establishment to what were often referred to as the 'lower orders,' it marks a turning point in the whole history of Victorian Britain.

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(33) Parliamentary Papers, Report of the 1851 Census, 1852-3, Volume LXXXV, p. XXIV

Sources and Bibliography.

a. General.

b. Sources of statistical data on railway passenger traffic in Parliamentary Papers.

c. Contemporary newspapers and periodicals.

d. Bibliography.

a. General.

For basic information about the Great Exhibition the most useful starting point is C. H. Gibbs-Smith's book, The Great Exhibition of 1851, A Commemorative Album, London, 1950. This can be supplemented by the wide coverage given to all aspects of the Exhibition by contemporary newspapers and periodicals. Of these, the most famous is probably the Illustrated London News, but one must not overlook the periodicals which came into existence purely to capitalise on the Exhibition and which did not long survive its closure. Of these The Journal of the Exhibition published by The Critic is most useful for the period leading up to the opening of the Exhibition, and particularly for the information it provides on the subscription associations, and The Illustrated Exhibitor published by John Cassell is valuable on the Exhibition itself.

The provincial press also deserves examination. Some newspapers developed a particular interest, for example, The Western Times in Bristol, where the editor, Thomas Latimer, was a strong supporter. But even those which were suspicious of the Exhibition as a symbol of the Free Trade policy gave it extensive coverage.

Much of this, of course, was simply copied from the London newspapers, but a great deal of information can be found on local visitors, subscription associations, industrial visits and railway excursions.

For any examination of the preparations made by the railway companies and the scale of excursion traffic one must consult the specialised railway newspapers. But for a more detailed study the archives of the railway companies are available in the British Transport Archives.

It should also be noted that the Guildhall Library has an extensive collection of commercial and industrial documents from companies with a City connection. To supplement this I was fortunate to receive assistance from a number of Company archivisits.

I should also like to draw attention to The Diary of John Tod, which is held in the Scottish Record Office. Although many contemporaries described their visits in memoirs and autobiographies, John Tod, an Edinburgh engineer, is the only person I have discovered who kept a lengthy diary describing almost every detail of the two week visit to London paid by his family and himself. As well as being invaluable as a source of background information, it is most enjoyable to read.

b. Sources of Data in Parliamentary Papers.

Statistics on railway passenger traffic used in Chapter VI were obtained from the following sources:

1847	LXIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 706
1847/48	LXIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 234
1847/48	LXIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 688
1847/48	XXVI	Report of Railway Commissioners	Command Number 938
1849	LI	Accident Reports	Command Number 88
1849	LI	Accident Reports	Command Number 592
1849	LI	Summary of Returns	Command Number 6
1849	LI	Summary of Returns	Command Number 418
1849	XXVII	Report of Railway Commissioners	Command Number 1061
1850	LIII	Accident Reports	Command Number 197
1850	LIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 10
1850	LIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 602
1850	XXXI	Report of Railway Commissioners	Command Number 1249
1851	LI	Accident Reports	Command Number 13
1851	LI	Accident Reports	Command Number 274
1851	LI	Accident Reports	Command Number 610
1851	LI	Summary of Returns	Command Number 12
1851	LI	Summary of Returns	Command Number 313
1851	XXX	Report of Railway Commissioners	Command Number 1332
1852	XLVIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 24
1852	XLVIII	Summary of Returns	Command Number 541
1852	XLVIII	Accident Reports	Command Number 335
1854	XXXVIII	Report of Railway Department	Command Number 1814

c. Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals:

Fraser's Magazine

Herepath's Journal

Journal of the Exhibition

The Aberdeen Herald

The Aberdeen Journal

The Ayr Observer

The Brechin Advertiser

The Economist

The Excursionist

The Exhibition Herald

The Galloway Advertiser & Wigtownshire Free Press

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The Illustrated Exhibitor

The Illustrated London News

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